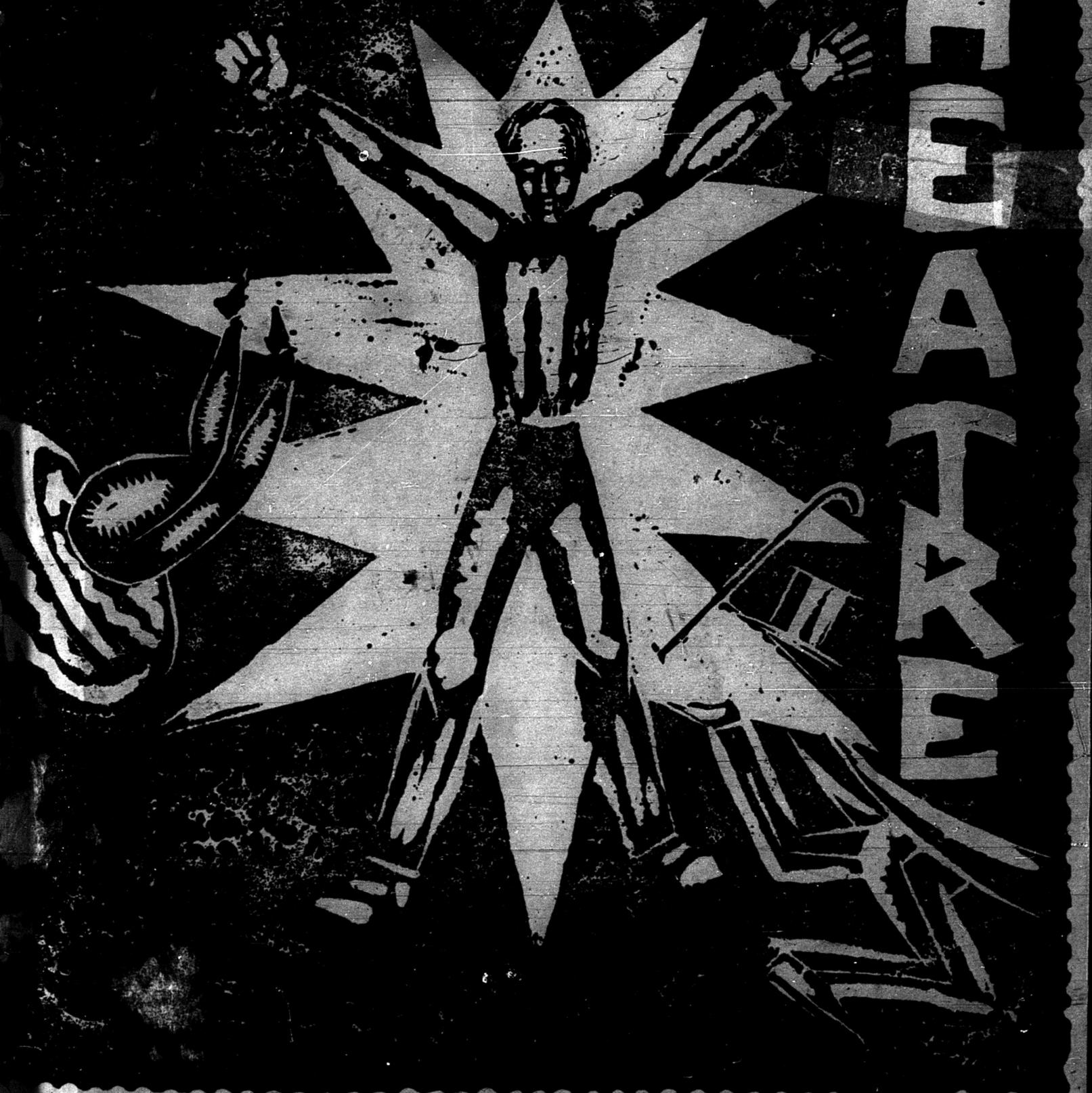


WORKERS' UNION



APRIL

1931

THE WORKERS THEATRE
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Dedication

The Wall St. crash of last year came somewhat as a surprise to some of our leading citizens, who had claimed that our prosperity was the product of our present system of society which is definitely leading to the abolition of poverty and the golden age. But when this crash was followed by the current depression things began to look so bad that many capitalists themselves began to agree that all is not right with the system. They began to suggest remedies, designed presumably to help the worker but aiming in reality only to appease the hungry masses lest they revolt. The capitalist assumes that things will soon be normal again and meanwhile it is good business to throw a bone to the workers - what's to prevent one from taking the bone back when conditions become normal?

Unfortunately, times can never be "normal" again. The present depression will pass and will be followed by a short period of prosperity, but a greater depression than the present is bound to follow. As long as the profit motive in industry will function unchecked, so long will producers of commodities fight for markets, with the inevitable introduction of further perfected machinery, rationalization and over-production. Workers will continue to be treated as tools to make greater profits for stockholders, to go on the scrap heap when old or deskilled by new machinery, and our standing army of unemployed will continue to increase as more machinery is introduced and competition for markets becomes keener.

Such a state of affairs is very serious since it threatens the very life of every worker. When he attempts to protest, however, he finds that his voice is a voice crying in the wilderness. For instance, when he takes his grievance against his employer to the courts, he finds that the courts do not aim to dispense justice but merely aim to uphold laws, and these are in favor of the employer. Or when the worker takes his case to the priest, the priest urges him to be obedient to his master, and tells him that God will reward him in heaven. Apparently the capitalists have the workers tied up in a knot. Still, there is one way out - the

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workers can unite, organize and change such conditions, reorganize such a society.

They are immediately confronted, however, with the necessity of organizing completely, as one, or not at all. They know that piecemeal organization is useless, that to organize one group of workers and leave others unorganized is lost motion, a waste of energy. As long as there exist unorganized groups the capitalists can play them against organized groups and thus wreck them. Such was the case with miners' unions being smashed when various mines operated with unorganized negro labor were able to undersell unionized mines. Such is also the case in the clothing industry where manufacturers can send the materials out of the city to the small towns to be made up by non-union labor. Clearly all must be organized.

The problem of organizing an entire nation seems stupendous if not impossible. The problem becomes easier, however, when we qualify that it is sufficient to have the majority organized provided the remainder is sympathetic to the idea of organization. We must add to that that the thing must be done at all costs and that necessity will find a way. How can we reach the masses to urge them to organize, to awaken them?

Capitalist society has six means of reaching the masses - thru the press, the radio, the movies, the theatre, the schools, the church. Because of lack of finances the workers must rely upon the word of mouth method, and to a small extent upon the press. Both methods, however, have certain drawbacks. To reach the workers thru the press the workers must have a great deal of money. The word of mouth method functions during during strikes, when groups of workers come to meetings and listen to organizers. Both methods are of a temporary nature - the press may be discontinued for a variety of reasons; the activity of the organizer function only in the meeting hall and cease when the strike is over.

We must look for additional methods of reaching the masses. We must attempt not only to reach them in their meeting places during periods of strike but we must reach them in their social clubs during their hours of leisure. (We should even try to reach them at home thru the radio, but this is obviously impossible at present.) They must not wait for an organizer to come and organize them, but each and every one of them must be made to urge one another to organize, each be made a speaker and a fighter in the workers' cause. Because of its form the Workers' Theatre is an effective medium for such work.

This theatre, however, must be organized in such a manner that dramatic groups may be developed thruout the country; that traveling groups may be evolved, ready one day to go to strike meetings to cheer up the strikers, just as ready another day to accompany a demonstration to inspire the workers; it must be a theatre where the worker may be inspired to fight for his liberation, a theatre of the class struggle - a theatre of the workers, by the workers, for the workers.

The immediate task, therefore, is this - to plan the organization of class conscious workers theatres in every town and community in the country; to help these groups with advice and plays; and where possible with personal contacts and technical assistance; to show these dramatic groups and the workers organizing them how to utilize these groups so as to make them weapons in the class struggle, tools for the liberation of the working class. This is the job before the Workers Theatre magazine, and toward its accomplishment the editors intend to dedicate themselves.

ORGANIZE DRAMATIC GROUPS

If you are wondering how to activate the inactive membership in your organization, how to draw a younger element into it, how to make your activities more interesting and stimulating so that members instead of dropping out will bring others in - organize a dramatic group.

If you are a worker in a shop, a factory or a mine, where the struggle for existence makes one day as dark as the other; if you are oppressed by the iron heel of capitalism, and you want to cry out in protest - organize a dramatic group.

Start dramatic groups in unions, in fraternal organizations, in social clubs, in company unions, in Y M C A 's - in the north, south, east, and west, let dramatic groups dot the land from coast to coast. Don't expect profits in money but profit you can and will get from these groups. Thru them you can give voice to your protest and let other workers know the wrongs you have suffered. You can show up in their true colours your boss, your foreman, the priest, the politician, in this most effective way. These groups will help awaken the workers.

Organize dramatic groups and write to us. Ask us for advice, ask us for plays, tell us of your problems and we will help you solve them. We may be able to help

you organize: If within reaching distance we will send you a director to start you going.

Start a group and subscribe to this magazine--it will give you the latest dope on what other workers are doing. When you get thru with it pass it along.

THE RISE OF THE WORKERS THEATRE

by

F. Rauh and Lo. Hartman

It is now about eight years ago that the Workers Theatre was organized. Under the name of the Workers Drama League a group was formed as the result of a pageant, with scenes of the French and Russian Revolution, given for an International Labor Defence bazaar.

From the beginning the Workers Theatre had for its idea the use of all arts by the workers as an additional weapon in the class struggle. Pageants, therefore, which can employ all the arts, were an important part of its work. But it also experimented in all dramatic and art forms, pantomimes, plays, reviews, dancing and chorus work. The Workers Theatre realized it was working in a new field and had to find more forms of the theatre by which it could best express the class struggle and make the greatest appeal to the masses.

The Workers Drama League, as it was first organized conceived its purpose to be a national workers dramatic organization and several steps were taken in that direction. Groups sprang up in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and other places and were assisted by the New York organization in various ways. We helped them with organizational plans and with plays.

As we were creating a Workers Theatre we felt the work should be, as far as possible, conducted by the workers themselves, but we were always glad to have the cooperation of professionals or semi-professionals who accepted our aims and tried to help us put over our ideas. Naturally there were great difficulty encountered.

It is difficult for professionals to understand the workers' attitude towards their theatre, and the workers who were inexperienced and used to argument and debate were loathe to follow instructions they did not understand. And so through trials and errors we had to learn.

Sometimes we did not know whether the curtain would up, as the conflicting ideas would come to a head at the crucial moment. The day before the opening of our first play the director walked out, the scenery had to be repainted over night and we found no time for a dress rehearsal. When finally we raised the curtain before an impatient audience of twelve hundred people, we found to our consternation that the acoustics were so bad only the first rows could hear what was going on.

As the result of such experience, we came to the conclusion that it was necessary to train our own directors, write our own plays and devise our own scenery in order to carry on.

As membership in the Workers Theatre was open to all who professed to agree with our aims we were constantly hindered in our activities by those who wanted to use the organization to further their personal ambitions. It was necessary to carry on a constant struggle against such elements as the very basis for the existence and progress of the Workers Theatre is a spirit of cooperation.

As the work proceeded from year to year our ideas and our work became clarified. We strove to interpret the growing revolutionary struggle and became more and more a part of the revolutionary movement taking part in the work of all the mass organizations.

Perhaps one of our most complete theatrical ventures was the production of "The Biggest Boob in the World" by Karl Wittfogel. This was a full length play in four acts, with changes of scenery, a cast of thirty players and which was produced several times with considerable success.

By these and other efforts we feel we have been an influence in the English and other language revolutionary theatrical groups. The Workers Theatre formulated a plan for coordinating the work of all these organizations so that they can give their best efforts to the revolutionary movement.

This work which the Workers Theatre carried on through many years, is developing along with the whole revolutionary movement and promises to become a strong instrument of propaganda and at the same time a means of recreation to the working-class.

Letter from the Blue Blouses of Russia to the Workers Laboratory Theatre.

Glad to hear from you. The thought that our work is known in America and that "we could be helpful to each other" makes us happy and creates a feeling of Proletarian solidarity.

You are perfectly right when you say that we should exchange experiences in the interest of the proletarian theatre movement. Hence, we thank you for your inquiry concerning contact with us, and we will try to answer the questions of interest to you.

Your letter gave encouragement to our organization to form an International Buro, the purpose of which shall be to exchange experiences and repertoire with workers dramatic groups of the world. The necessity for this department has existed for a long time, for we have been receiving requests for repertoire from various groups all over world. We have a connection with the New Masses which printed in its October number and we are making permanent contact with Germany and Belgium.

In the future we are going to pass on to all countries the lessons we learned and the experiences we gained during our seven years work in the role of Agit-prop theatre.

The "Blue Blouse Theatre" is a new Revolutionary organization on the Cultural Front, the outgrowth of the October Revolution. Our methods of production are governed by the principle: to give to the worker-spectator in a convincing, entertaining theatrical performance, a clear-cut political show, picturing the needs of the present day, organizing for the struggle, and picturing the structure of our socialist society.

To meet this requirement we developed the method of staging a newspaper, i.e. "The Living Newspaper." The Blue Blouse org. was originally organized by a group

of newspapermen who wanted to dramatize a newspaper. This experiment was a success and was followed by numberless imitators. During its seven years of existence, the form of Blue Blouse productions has changed, but the fundamental principle of being up-to-date in a clear-cut political line has remained.

At present, the Blue Blouse theatre is a large organization serving millions of workers in U. S. S. R. The actors are for most part-professionals.

The Theatre proper is divided into 12 groups: 9 in Moscow, 3 in Leningrad. Upon orders of the Central Organization in Moscow, they tour U. S. S. R.

Each group consists of 12 people: 1 general manager, 1 pianist, 6 actors, 4 actresses. In the Central Organization there is a Literature Buro, which invites the authors of our theatre; A Directors Buro, which supplies the directors for our productions; and finally there is a Party Buro which watches over the political side of the work.

All important political events, all campaigns conducted by the Party in U. S. S. R., all revolutionary holidays find their expression in our programs.

In U. S. S. R. there are several thousands of workers groups following our principles of productions and using our repertoire. After a Blue Blouse troupe toured Germany and Latvia, in 1927, a large number of groups sprang up and began to do work similar to ours.

Now about our work. Since we work in various clubs, factory lunchrooms which are seldom equipped with stages, we usually perform on the floor; hence our equipment is light and

collapsible. Everything is transported by streetcars and can be set up in 5 minutes. We have practically no stage properties, but if the scene calls for an orchard, for example, we simply place three chairs on the stage and cover one of them with green cloth resembling trees. Everything else is staged in a similar manner. All the props are made collapsible and light.

The costumes are made according to our fundamental principle, i. e., every performer wears a blue blouse over which he puts on the clothes of the character that he is impersonating; he puts on just enough to give an impression of the character.

Make-up: the least possible, except in grotesque roles, then we use masks, mustaches, beards, etc. Here we strive to attain an important end that of achieving maximum expression and quick change of make-up, a very important problem. The problem of the actor is above all, to give a working class interpretation to each role. Since in the repertoire of the agit-prop theatre there must be only political plays, the proper interpretation of each role requires inner conviction of the lines spoken. Hence each actor must be class conscious and educated politically. A Blue Blouse actor must be versatile; he must sing, dance, and act. That's why it is so difficult to get into our theatre, for not every actor can be a Blue Blouser.

A Blue Blouse performance consists of a series of skits and numbers of various forms and subjects but having one common aim: to concentrate the attention of the spectator on a question of immediate importance. During the period of socialist reconstruction of our society our chief problem is to relate in an interesting theatrical manner or form, the aims of socialism, our shortcomings, and to draw the worker into the struggle, to carry out the tasks set forth by the C.P. (Our emphasis) our problem is to tell of the heroic past of our revolution, of our friends and enemies.

The problem of our theatre is to give the worker-spectator inner strength and courage.

Forms composing Blue Blouse program:

1. Oration This is a permanent number of each program. The text: usually in rhyme, political in content, giving highlights in news and even statistics of our achievements and progress toward socialism.

This number is built upon combination of movement and speech. To intensify the dramatic effect of this rhythm, melodic and rhythmic music is used as an accompaniment. Singing, dancing, mass recitation, and rhythmic mass movements can also be introduced as background.

2. Sketch This is a playlet for a cast of 2 to 5 players usually satirical. Here we ridicule the shortcomings of our present system and various evils. This number is intended to show what must be avoided in politics and in all social life.

3. Chorus Chorus singing with dances. The problem of the chorus is to give a colourful performance, filled with revolutionary pathos. The chorus can be peasant, i. e. using peasant melodies and substituting ~~the~~ verses dealing with collectivization. Red Army choruses, picturing Red Army life, agitating for the defense of the S.U. and glorifying its victories, etc.

4. Chastooshka This occupies a prominent place on our program, and we are sending you plenty of material on it. The Chastooshka is a four verse song with a light snappy melody. It has keen political satire. The Chastooksha ridicules, agitates, and convinces with its catchy, gay form.

This is approximately the nature of a B.B. performance. But since the theatre is continually moving forward with life, this form is constantly changing. We will try to keep you informed on this subject.

this subject.

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The technique of a performance is constructed thus. The length of performance one hour, twenty minutes. The program consists of seven or eight numbers usually in the following order: -

1. Oration, 2. Sketch, 3. Vaudeville, 4. Number about Red Army or Navy, monologue, chastooshkis, dances and chorus. Of course, other numbers are included. This depends upon the questions that are of particular interest to the audience for whom we perform, e.e. trade union, women organizations, etc. The performances are held after meetings, conventions, entertainments, factory lunchrooms, etc.

Music plays a tremendous role in our work. This subject requires a whole letter, and we will send this to you soon with notes.

Well, that's some information about our work. Of course, everything is not rosy for us, at least in the quality of our work. Particularly is this true of the texts. The trouble is that they are usually written in a hurry and this results in low quality and unimpressive performance. However, new and

authors have been joining our ranks of the Blue Blouses, and these defects are being slowly remedied.

And now Comrades will you answer the questions of interest to us?

How long has your theatre been in existence?

Have you women members?

Have you Music?

How do you stage your performances?

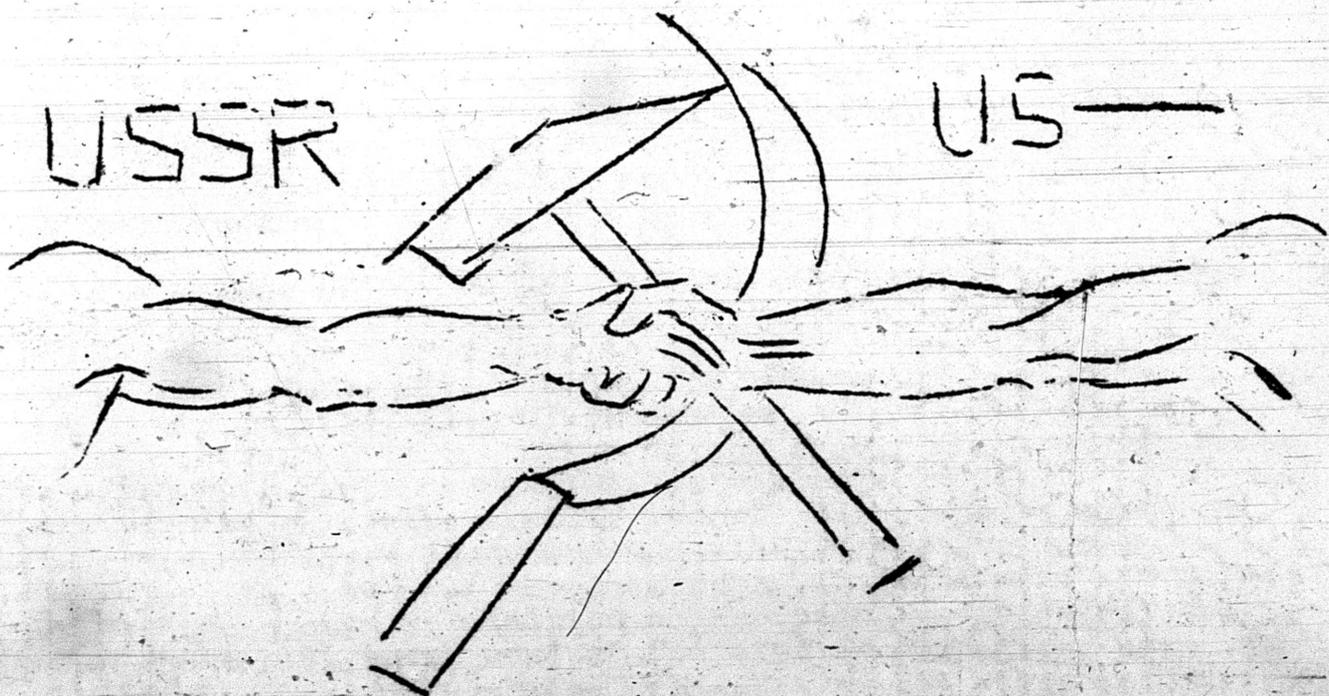
Do Police suppress your performances?

Besides this describe your performances. Send us your plays, don't bother translating, we understand English.

We thank you for writing. Write again without fail, we promise to answer. Soon we will mail you our repertoire and photographs.

Greetings from The Blue Blouse Theatre.

International Bureau
C. Scherson



The Workers Laboratory Theatre
by
Harry Ober

The Workers Laboratory Theatre is a cooperative venture on the part of the class conscious workers to use the theatre as an educational weapon in the class struggle. This statement embodies briefly and generally the organization, aims and functions of the workers theatre as we conceive them.

Our chief problem is how to reach all the elements of the working class most easily. It is an established fact that no workers' theatre has much chance of success if it tries to imitate the bourgeois theatre and starts out as an elaborate business undertaking. The failure of group after group clearly demonstrates the truth of this statement. The workers are not prepared, financially, and ideologically to support such a theatre. Consequently the theatre either either modifies its policies and makes concessions to the prejudices of the intellectual middle-class or it fails. In either case it ceases to be useful to the working class. We must, therefore, start out very modestly, but not less effectively and try to reach workers in some other way. The next best way is to train a group that will be ready to perform any place workers gather--at meetings, demonstrations, and even on trucks on the streets. The Workers Laboratory theatre was able to perform only at meetings in the past.

For this reason we have reached a class of workers who were either class conscious already or at least sympathetic. As soon as we procure a truck we will be able to extend our work and participate in campaigns on the streets.

Alongside of our activities at workers gatherings we make appeals to workers to build their own permanent theatre. Every Saturday night we present a program consisting of a lecture, play and discussion. In this manner we feel that an audience is being trained to take an active interest in the development of our theatre. At these discussions we keep our ears open and listen eagerly to what the workers have to say in regard to our work. It gives us a chance to revise our plays in accordance with the demands of the workers.

This brings us to the term "Laboratory". Anybody who has seen the evolution of a play from the day it is presented by the playwrights to the time it has been produced a number of times, will realize how much we live up to this term. The individuality of the author, director as well as actor counts for very little. Our aim: the presentation of the class struggle as clearly as possible is our only guide. Consequently we always seek to improve our plays by changing directors and lines in accordance with suggestions made either by the member of the theatre or the audiences attending our performances. In addition we are planning to organize a group which will spend most of its time experimenting with such problems as the handling of masses on the stage effectively

THE training of actors and directors as well as organizers of new groups.

Since the members of the theatre are not deriving any gain either financially or in the promotion of the individual ego, it is understood that some other means of keeping people together must be evolved. We substituted the principle of group cooperation for that of individual gain. No member of the theatre is permitted either to do all the important work or to monopolize too many functions no matter how capable that person may be. We would rather lose a "genius" than stifle the development of a group. Each member of the theatre is subordinated to the group and every product is a group product, in as much as it embodies the suggested changes and modifications of the entire group. Great stress is also placed upon the development of new directors and other functionaries. In this manner we aim to destroy any bureaucratic tendencies on the part of individuals who consider themselves superior in ability to the group. Any person who makes himself indispensable, irreplaceable and monopolizes all important functions is regarded as a bureaucrat and a dangerous element.

The executive committee of the Workers Laboratory Theatre is charged with the task of directing the work of the whole theatre to the successful accomplishment of our aims and the checking of all dangerous tendencies enumerated above. It, with the approval of the entire membership, lays down the line for every department in the theatre. Each department in turn is responsible for the organization and execution of its work.

The playwrights department must supply plays to the directors. It has for its task to publish from time to time subjects for plays and appeal to the members of the theatre to write plays. It is also responsible for the development of a technique suitable for our productions. For instance, for our purpose, short plays with few characters and props are most suitable

The directors upon receiving a play must organize the various parts of the play from the point of view of acting, directing, lighting and transporting as well as well as the setting up of a play at a given place. The director must immediately refer every part of the work to the proper department where it will in turn be organized. Lights, properties, and other work of technical nature



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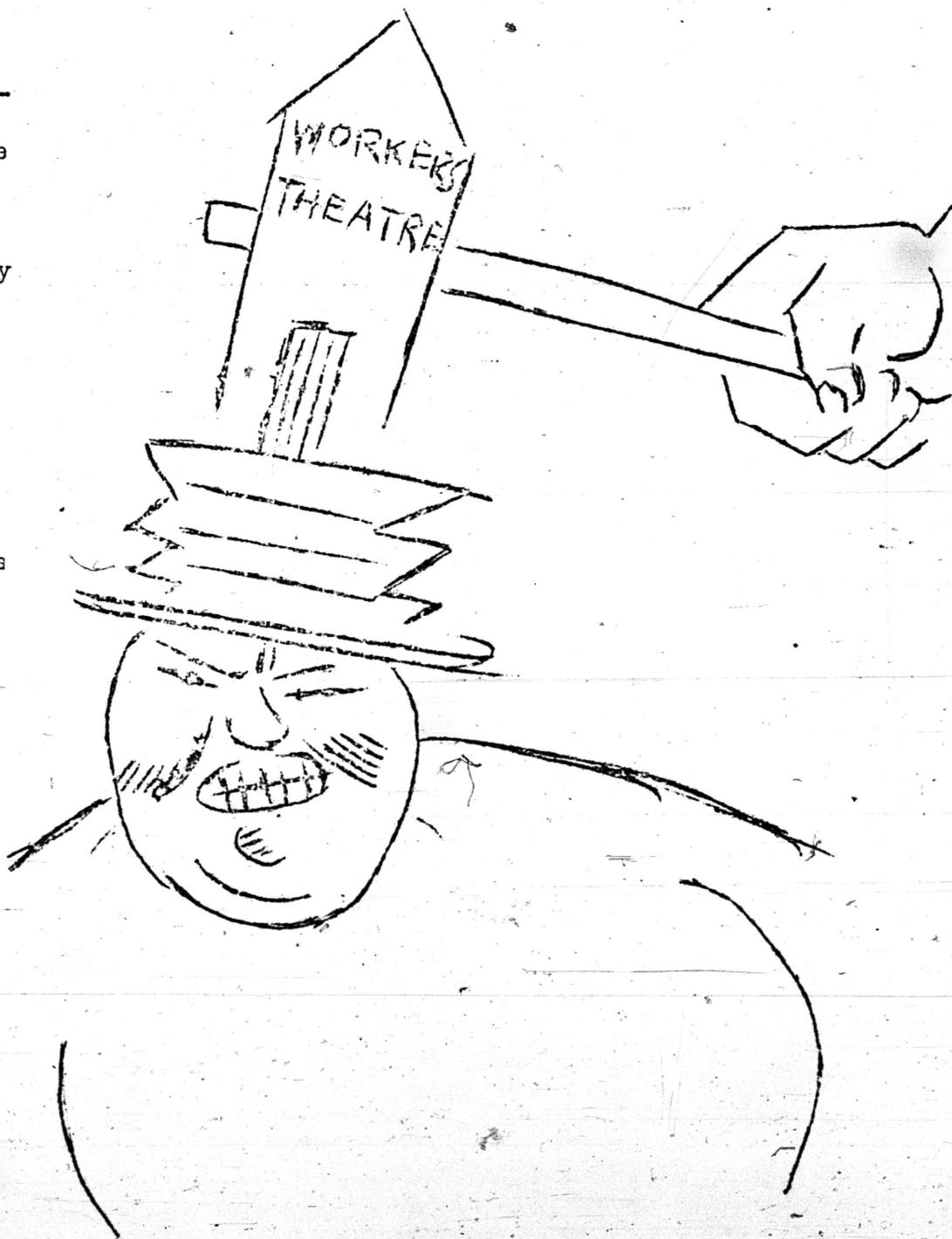
WORKERS THEATRE

must be referred to the technical department.

The chairman of each department is directly responsible to the executive committee. In this manner the executive committee can keep close contact with the work of all the departments and check the development of undesirable elements.

We also find that the political and economic consciousness of the members of the theatre must be raised to a very high level. Class consciousness, political education is a very important necessity in a workers theatre.

We are planning a program of such education at the the present. Every member of the theatre will thus be able to acquire the necessary sensitivity to political and economic changes, and will be able to do his or her work with intelligence and consciousness of aim - the building of a workers' theatre.



UNEMPLOYED

Characters:

Capitalist

Minister

Labor Leader

Servant

Communist

Worker

The stage is empty. One worker walks slowly across. His head is bowed. After a moment another worker follows him. One after another, the rest of the group of workers come out and walk to and fro on the stage.

1 worker I am hungry.
 2 worker My family is hungry.
 3 worker I want to work.
 4 worker I want a job.
 5 worker Won't somebody give me a job?
 1 worker I am hungry, why can't I have food? I see lots of food in restaurants. I am cold, why can't I have a coat? I see many coats in clothing stores.

(Capitalist comes in and sits in chair at left of stage)
 Capitalist (Picks up phone, listens---laughs) There isn't anyone that can have a better yacht than I. I've got to have the best little yacht in the world. I want special attention paid to the bar. On one side... (sees the workers) What is that damn noise out there? I can't talk.

Servant Master, master, it is the unemployed complaining.
 Capitalist Unemployed complaining? What have they got to complain about? (speaks in phone a minute and hangs up) What has happened to my institutions? Get me Mr. Religious Dope.
 (at these words the minister pops out from behind the capitalist chair)

Minister At your service lord. What is your desire?
 Capitalist (pointing to floor) Bow- Bow- Bow.
 Minister Yes, lord. Yes, lord. Yes, lord. (bows to ground)
 Capitalist You are a splendid fellow. I shall give you a hundred thousand dollars for your new parish. Go out and quiet these fellows. (As Minister prepares to leave) Wait, wait, I shall give you the proper send-off. (kicks him off)

Minister Thank you, lord.
 1 worker Where shall I go?
 2 worker What shall I do?
 3 worker I am hungry.
 3&4 workers -Hungry
 All Workers- Hungry.

Minister; Amen, amen, Jeremiah, Chapter 2, line 6. In the name of the father, son and holy ghost, blessed is he who suffers for he shall inherit the kingdom of god.
 5 worker I'm tired. I have been walking all day looking for work. Why do some people ride in big machines while I have to walk all day and can't find a job,

1 worker I have no money. I have no carfare. I looked into a bank where I saw tons of money. Why must I have nothing?

1 & 2 worker Nothing.

All workers Nothing.

Minister Jesus died on the cross to save sinners. Repent before it is too late

3 worker Where will my family sleep tonight?

4 worker I want bread.

4 & 5 worker Bread.

All workers Bread.

Minister Throw not your bread upon the waters. The lord is your shepard, you shall not want. He maketh you to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth you beside the still waters. He restoreth your soul. Surely good- and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life and you will dwell in the house of the lord forever.

1 worker The landlord is putting me and my family out tonight. Where will we go?

Minister Have faith. Have faith. In the book of David, chapter 4 it is written, this poor man cried out unto the lord, and the lord heard and saved him out of all his troubles, saved him out of all his troubles. Have faith and pray.
(all the workers kneel)

2 worker Oh lord, help me find a job.

3 worker God, send me money so that I can pay my rent.

4 worker Oh god, send me clothing so that I will not freeze.

5 worker Lord, send me work so that I may not hunger and starve in the strets.

Minister In the name of the father, son and the holy ghost, Amen, Amen.
(the Communist enters from right and walks up to the minister.)

Minister Who are you?

Communist I am a worker, like these.

Minister What do you want?

Communist I want work, like these.

Minister Why do you not pray like these?

Communist I have prayed like these. I have bowed like these, and I have learned that you are here to mislead the workers. I have learned that you are the paid servant of the rich. (the communist walks forward as he talks backing the minister off the stage)

Minister Do not listen to him, pray and the lord will help you, pray, pray.

Communist We know what your prayers have done for us. (by this time the minister is off and the Communist returns to the masses) You have prayed. (pointing out individuals in the mass) Has God sent you bread so that you and your family can eat tonight. Has God sent you ~~money~~ so that you can pay your rent tonight. Has God sent you ~~money~~ so that you wahl not freeze. Has God sent clothing
you work so that you will not hunger and starve in the streets?

1 worker (Masses slowly rise) Who are you?

Communist I am a worker like you, one of the exploited.

2 worker Who sends you?

Communist No one sends me. I come because I need you and you need me.

3 worker Communist Can you help us?
 No, I cannot help you, nor can you help me. We must help each other. We must work together.

4 worker Communist Shall we starve together.
 NO, Don't starve. FIGHT.

All workers But How.

5 worker Communist We have no weapons.
 We must organize. Organization is our weapon. (he comes in to the masses and they talk in low tones with the Communist on the question of organization.)

Capitalist (the capitalist who has been sleeping wakes up)
 That damn noise again. I must get someone to stop it, some responsible person, - someone to quiet these workers. (entering) Hello, boss. I'm your man.

Green Capitalist Who are you?
 Green Have you heard of a labor leader who arranges wage cuts?
 Capitalist Yes.
 Green That's me
 Capitalist Good!
 Green Have you heard of a labor leader who arranges longer hours?
 Capitalist Yes.
 Green That's me.
 Capitalist Good!
 Green Have you heard of a labor leader who breaks strikes?
 Capitalist Yes.
 Green That's me.
 Capitalist Good!
 Green Have you heard of the A. F. of L?
 Capitalist Ah, - A. F. of L. Here is the man I am looking for. Go out and quiet these fellows.

Green (goes to the workers, removes his high hat) Fellow workers, friends. What are you doing here in the streets? Why are you not at home?

3 worker We have no homes?
 4 worker We are starving.
 4 & 5 worker Starving
 All workers Starving
 Green I will fix that up with the bosses.
 1 worker Why with the bosses?
 2 worker The bosses have thrown us out on the streets?
 3 worker The bosses leave us starve.
 Communist The bosses are our enemies.
 Comm.&4 workers - Enemies.
 All workers Enemies.

Green Workers, your criticism is partly right, but you must not be unjust. The bosses are not your enemies. In the present crises they suffer as much as you. When business and industry are normal again, then the bosses will prosper and you will be able to have work and wages. Therefore you must work hand in hand with the bosses to bring back prosperity. The interests of the workers and the interests bosses are the same.

Communist So that's it. At last the solution. And so the boss really suffers as much as we. The interests of the workers and the interests of the bosses are the same. Your boss refuses to give you work so that he may save wages and thus save more money. - but you must have work so that you will get wages and be able to live. Are these the same interests? and you - you need a home so that you and your children will not go homeless, but your landlord throws you out because you can't pay the rent. Are these the same interests? - And when

prosperity returns, when you have work again, what then? The bosses lower your wages, we fight for higher wages. The bosses want longer hours, we fight for shorter hours. The boss wants you to work faster, we fight against this speed up of the bosses. We struggle for our daily bread while the boss sticks profits in his pockets. These are the same interests that we have with the bosses. Comrades bosses and workers have no common interests.- Interest fights against interest, Boss against worker, enemy against enemy, - class against class.

Green

You are a Communist--

Communist

Yes, I am a communist--

Green

You ah, do you hear, he has given himself away. He is a Russian agitator.

Communist

Yes, I am an agitator--an agitator for the fight against exploitation and oppression, an agitator for the freeing of the working class, an agitator against all misleaders who under the mask of friends of labor betray us to our exploiters. Yes, I agitate for the defense of the Soviet Union, the only country in the world where there are no more exploiters, the only country in the world where the workers are free, the only country in the world where the worker rules.

Green

Workers be proud, do not forget that you are Americans. Do not forget that you are Americans. Do not listen to these foreigners. Get rid of this foreign element.

Communist

There is this foreign element in the working class? Are you without wages, like us, or are you paid \$20,000 per year for your position. --Has your landlord thrown you out in the street because you cannot pay your rent like us or do you sleep in a 15 room apartment on Park Avenue.-- Do you hunger and starve when the workers hunger and starve, or do you fill your belly at the banquet of the bosses with the food that we workers have made.--Answer me. Who is a foreign element in the working class?

Green

I am not concerned with this question.--Workers,--do not be deceived. You want help. The only one who can help you is the one that has something. The Communist himself says that the boss has all the money and all the goods.. therefore only the boss can help you. Let me speak to the boss for you.

1 worker

What can you do for us?

2 worker

Can you get work for us?

Green

We have apples for you to sell.

1 worker

Five apples a day.

3 worker

2 cents an apple.

4 worker

10 cents a day.

5 worker

10 cents a day for an entire family.

Communist

And more profit for the apple trust.

Green

We have soup lines for you.

1 worker

We don't want any soup-lines.

2 worker

We don't want any dishwater.

Green

We are going to collect good statistics.

3 worker

We don't want statistics.

4 worker

We want food for our children.

Green

We will go ~~XXX~~ to the bosses and ask for more charity

5 worker

We don't want charity.

Communist

You are a misleader of the workers.

1 worker

You are a tool of the bosses.

2 worker

Down with the servants of the bosses.

3 worker

Down with the A. F. of L.

(they advance menacingly and Green retreats off)
(each in turn comes forward and points his finger
at the audience)

1 worker We must organize!
2 worker We must organize and fight.
3 worker We must organize and fight for work or wages.
4 worker Work or wages.
5 worker Unemployment insurance.
All Work or wages - Unemployment insurance.

(they begin to sing the Internationale and the
audience joins in.)



WE MUST WRITE PLAYS

The bourgeois theatre, the theatre of Broadway and the tired business man, the little theatre, all are dying rapidly and their places are being taken by Workers' Theatres. In order to grow and develop these theatres need plays, and that means you, workers, must write them. Do not be discouraged if you have never written before - playwriting may be learned just like any other trade. Once you master the tricks of the trade, everything is as easy as pie.

However, two considerations must be emphasized at the beginning - one is that the play should have something definite to convey, a lesson to teach, and second, that these plays are to be written for a Workers' theatre. The last point must be kept in mind, for plays written for a bourgeois theatre are written with the aim of amusing, entertaining people for money. These are cork and bull concoctions, written to amuse the bourgeoisie for two and a half hours after dinner and ending in a pleasant manner so as not to upset their stomachs. They are written in the idiom the audience itself speaks, and they deal in situations the audience is familiar with - love affairs, bootleggers, racketeers, etc.

Just as bourgeois plays deal with the life the audience is acquainted with so the worker-writer must write about the life the worker knows. With this difference that the worker's play must teach a moral, a lesson for the working class. While the plots of the former are ninety-nine per cent imagination the workers play should preferably be ninety-nine per cent actual situation. Just as the bourgeois play talks the language of the middle class the workers play must talk the language of the workers.

Don't expect to make a living by writing plays, you can't. The bourgeois theatre won't use your plays, the workers theatre can't pay for them. Remember that your plays will help liberate the workingclass, including you. That's enough compensation. Write to the best of your ability. Send them to the Workers Laboratory Theatre.



BOOKS ON THE THEATRE

Every worker aspiring to become a director in a Workers' theatre should be acquainted with the arts as well as the history of the theatre. We recommend the following books on these subjects:

Mantzios- History of the Theatre.
 Sheldon Cheney- History of the Theatre.
 Havemeyer- Drama of Primitive people.
 Huntley Carter- The New Spirit in the European Theatre.
 " " - The Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia.
 Haight- The Attic Theatre.

These books should be read for what they are, books by critics and theatre workers who do not understand (with the exception of Havemeyer and Carter) or do not care to show that the form of the theatre at a given time is determined by social and economic conditions and is a reflection of contemporary society. These books are dry enumerations of names, dates and the like, but the reader must attempt to get behind them and envision the social and utilitarian causes that gave rise to each particular form. The primitive theatre is very interesting and instructive. Books on anthropology will help a good deal.

PLAYS ON HAND

The following plays have been produced by the Workers Laboratory Theatre and copies may be obtained by writing to this magazine at 131 W 28th St., New York, N Y.

"BUY NOW" In the first part of this satire we see the President's commission on unemployment, The experts sit around a conference table and squabble over trivialities. At last they hit on the idea of a "Buy Now" campaign. In the second part of the play a worker walks along the street past several store fronts. He is unemployed - broke, but from radios and open stores he is assailed with the command: "Buy Now". Angry, he breaks a window and is taken to court where he tells the judge just what he thinks of the "Buy Now" campaign. The action is fast, the play taking about 20 minutes. It can be put on with about eight or ten actors and a minimum of settings.

"IT'S FUNNY AS HELL" A meeting is held to appeal for funds for the "poor unfortunate unemployed". There are the typical speakers: the welfare worker, the politician, the Reverend, the manufacturer. They all tell the audience of their great concern over unemployment, but - when an unemployed worker from the audience tries to present a petition to them - their true nature is exposed. The accurate realism of the play is very powerful. To put on the play, which is about 20 minutes in length, eight actors are needed.

"THE BIG STIFF" This is a short, witty burlesque. Uncle Sam is in bed with a swollen stomach. Dr. Green, Dr. Wood and Dr. Hoover try their best to revive the patient, but without success. The action takes about twelve minutes. There are nine characters.