

WORKERS'

OCTOBER
1931

THEATRE



15¢

W O R K E R S T H E A T R E

1931
October
Vol. I

7

Published monthly
by
UNITED WORKERS THEATRES OF NEW YORK:
Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W.I.R.
Prolet-Buchne

Address: 799 Broadway Room 330 New York City

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Single Copy 15 cents

Yearly Subscription 1.50

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE TASKS OF THE WORKERS THEATRE.

By Dram Bureau of the W.C.F.

During the election campaign of 1931 the Workers Theatre Groups are confronted with the problems of popularizing the issues facing the working class. The tasks of the Workers Theatres are twofold: first, what should be popularized? And second, how should it be done?

The answer to the first question lies in the summary of all problems that confront the working class: - wage cuts, unemployment, speed-up, deportations, racketeering and the misleading activities of the labor fakers.

There is no doubt that unemployment is one of the most important issues of to-day. Millions of workers and their families are facing starvation. Millions of others are working on a part time basis. Capitalism offers no relief for these millions. Every effort is being made by the capitalist class to oppose the introduction and passage of any sort of unemployment insurance bill. Only thru struggle can the working class force the bosses to grant unemployment insurance. It is, therefore, the task of the Workers Theatres to point this out to the working class and agitate thru the theatre for the passage of the workers unemployment insurance bill, to be administered by "a state commission of unemployed and employed workers selected by their organizations including the unemployed councils, unions and fraternal organizations; in the communities administration by a similar commission on a local basis." At the same time the Workers Theatre Groups must continue to agitate for immediately relief, free rent, no evictions, free food and clothing for children of the unemployed.

The bosses are placing the burden of the depression upon the working class by cutting wages of the workers in all industries. The wage cutting at present is the most extensive that was ever inaugurated. It covers mining, steel, textiles, automobiles and practically every other industry. The Workers Theatre must call upon the workers to resist these wage cuts thru strikes under the leadership of the revolutionary unions.

The bosses are well prepared to crush the spirit of revolt in the working masses thru mass deportations, police, gangsters, labor fakers and racketeers. The NY Times of Sept. 24, carries the news that a gangster and racketeer De Vito made a half a million Dollars in 1929 by breaking strikes. He received 250 000.- for breaking the teamsters strike in 1929. This money was paid out to De Vito by the Standard Oil Co. for breaking one strike. A few weeks ago the bosses called an "indignation meeting" at Central Park against racketeering. We must show the workers that the people who call these meetings are the ones who could not get along without Capone and De Vito.

No sooner do the workers strike when the immigration department sends its agents and deports every militant foreign born worker. The native born are terrorized and thrown into jail.

The labor fakers of the A.F. of L., the socialists, and the Musteites are working hand in hand with the bosses to betray the workers in every struggle. Mr. Green and M. Woll made a promise to Hoover that the workers will not strike. At the same time the bosses promised that they would not cut wages. This agreement misled millions of workers who made no preparations to resist wagecuts. The labor fakers knew that the bosses would not keep their promise. This is deliberate betrayal. We must expose that.

At the same time we must show the workers that there is one country where there is no unemployment, no hunger, no starvation. Instead, there is successful building of socialism under the Five Year Plan. The bosses are preparing for war against the Soviet Union. We must call upon the workers of the U.S.A. to defend the Soviet Union and to struggle for the establishment of a workers' and farmers' republic in the U.S.A.

These are the problems confronting the working class and these problems must be popularized by means of the theatre.

The election campaign confronts the Workers Theatres of this country with an entirely new task: to approach the broad masses of workers who are not yet class conscious, who are still influenced by capitalist propaganda, and who are even opposed to the idea of class struggle. Up to now the American Workers Theatres played, with very few exceptions, only before audiences of sympathetic or revolutionary workers. If our work in the election campaign shall be of any value for the revolutionary movement, then we have to leave this method of least resistance. We cannot wait any longer until the workers come to us or call us, we have to go to the workers. That means: we have to play on streets, at open-air meetings, at demonstrations, at factory gates, before employment offices, and in the meetings of organizations which are not yet affiliated with the revolutionary movement.

The necessity of going to the masses is obvious. But we should not deceive ourselves by putting up tasks which we cannot accomplish. We have to consider two difficulties: first that our groups are not yet acquainted with the technic of playing on streets; then, that we have only a few English speaking groups while the majority of the Workers Theatres are using foreign languages.

To begin with the second problem: this can be overcome by suitable organizational arrangements. For the time of the election campaign the English speaking groups and the foreign language organizations should cooperate in building mixed groups, consisting of two or three English speaking comrades and six to ten comrades of foreign language groups. The English speaking comrades have to take over

the solo parts, while the others will have pantomime roles, or smaller solo parts, or the form a recitation chorus. An effective election play suitable for performance by these combined groups should be written by the Workers Laboratory Theatre or another English speaking group. The organizational basis for the above mentioned arrangement exists in the local Dramatic Councils in which all groups are represented by their delegates.

The new tasks that we face in our election campaign work require not only a new organizational arrangement but also a new technic of performing. Here lies the other problem. We cannot find a new technic or style by looking around among the forms already in existence. A new style has to be created on the foundation of the given tasks and the existing circumstances. Our task is to win new fighters for the ranks of the class conscious revolutionary workers. Before we win new fighters we have to take them away from the influence of their own enemy, the capitalist. We have to consider our election play as an attack, well planned and progressing from one strategic point to the next. We have to see to a clear exposition of the following important points:

1. To-day's miserable conditions of the working class as an inevitable consequence of the capitalist system.
2. Exposure of the bourgeois parties as representatives of the capitalist system.
3. Exposure of the socialist party as accomplice of the capitalists.
4. The only way out: mass action of the workers.
5. The communist party as the only workers party.

Also in the form of our play we have to abandon decidedly the method of least resistance. A knocked down and fleeing capitalist will easily inflame an audience of sympathizers or communists. But a burlesque act like this does not convince any indifferent worker of the necessity to unite and fight in the ranks of the communist party and the revolutionary mass organizations, unless we show why and how it was possible to get rid of that parasite. That means: we have to prove everything - by facts, by figures. The same goes with slogans. Slogans, put together and divided among various speakers, are not yet an Agitprop play. First we have to explain the situation (capitalist exploitation), then, we have to deduct the conclusions (class against class, organization, fight), and, at last, we can bring up the slogans, to condense the whole complex of facts, demands, and tasks in a short, clear, and impressive formula.

Our tasks in the election campaign are not limited to the special Agitprop work on streets. In the meantime, bookings with the various organizations will go on and our regular programs cannot be

interrupted. But there are many ways and means to utilize the old repertory for election propaganda. By little changes and additions the current plays can easily be tied up with the election campaign. A short group recitation bringing out the main election issues could very effectively conclude all performances during the campaign.

An election campaign gives the Workers Theatres a better opportunity for real, effective Agitprop work than any other occasion. It is up to us to use this opportunity!

THE "RED BUILDERS" AT WORK.

A report from Germany.

To the masses! - To the shops! Where we can win the powerful majority of the working class where capitalist exploitation and terror on the one hand, and proletarian class consciousness on the other hand appear in the most condensed form; there is the right - but also the most difficult field for the activities of the revolutionary theatre groups. We recognized the importance of this task and took the initiative. We affiliated with the red shop nucleus in the "Leuna" plant.

"Leuna" is the world's biggest nitrate factory. It is the ammunition plant for the coming chemical war. To-day "Leuna" is producing fertilizers, to-morrow it can turn out poison gas to murder our brothers in the Soviet Union.

The giant plant used to employ 25 000 workers. But a brutal system of rationalization threw thousands of proletarians on the street. Murderous speed-up, wage cuts, reckless terror made this plant a hell for the workers. The factory had its own police department and an army of stoolpigeons to control and spy on the workers.

For eight weeks now, we, the "Red Builders", have been working in close cooperation with the red shop nucleus. Before we started to perform, we worked out a detailed plan of action and prepared a special "Leuna" repertory. Then we brought our message before the workers: we played in halls, at demonstrations, in the company villages, on public squares close to the factory. At the beginning we had only small audiences. But from performance to performance the workers became more interested, and at last, we played before large masses. After the performances we had long and interesting discussions with the workers. They went back to the factory and discussed the problems with their fellow workers. From day to day we could notice the growing success of our propaganda work. "Leuna" was turning "red".

The bosses used every means of terror against us. More than once we had to flee from the "private property" of the factory. But this could not discourage our group. On the contrary: we proceeded still more systematically, with still more enthusiasm, and - with still more success.

On this foundation, we carried thru our election campaign work with excellent results. We concluded our campaign with a powerful mass demonstration on the market of Merseburg. At noon, fliers had covered Merseburg and the "Leuna" plant with thousands of leaflets calling upon the workers to vote communist. There were 4000 workers in the lunchroom of the factory. But there was only one opinion: "Those communists are the right stuff!" Everybody was enthusiastic, - except the management of the company!

The evening mass demonstration was the most powerful demonstration "Leuna" ever saw. Thousands of workers heard our mass recitation. And the enthusiastic applause of thousands was the reward for our hard work during the past eight weeks.

The police tried to provoke trouble. But they were powerless before the masses who stood like a wall of granite. A small army of 2000 militant workers were ready to defend "their" Agitprop troupe against the police.

An hour later we drove back to Halle, while a powerful parade marched thru the streets of Merseburg.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMING ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The coming election campaign assumes more importance than ever in the development of the mass struggles against hunger, capitalist terror and imperialist war. The development of these campaigns is seriously hampered by the remnants of anti-parliamentary tendencies and underestimation of revolutionary possibilities of election campaigns. The election this fall, important in themselves are of even greater significance as being a test of our preparedness to exploit the tremendous possibilities before us in the general national elections of 1932. The election campaigns must be made the instrument to bring together the issues of all the partial struggles and the issues of particular fields of work into one consolidated program of revolutionary working-class struggle against capitalism, concretizing the general slogan, "Class against Class", and showing the exploited masses the impossibility of any way out of the crisis except the way of mass revolutionary struggle and proletarian revolution. (From the 13th Plenum resolution of the C.P.U.S.A.)

PROBLEMS OF PLAY-DIRECTING

by John E. Bonn, Prolet-Buchne, N.Y.

The question as to who is capable of directing a play in a workers' theatre has not yet become as real a problem or a matter for discussion as, for instance, the question of how to write plays. The reason for this does not lie in the fact that this question does not raise any problem or that this problem has already been solved. On the contrary, the problem has scarcely been touched because most of the groups take it for granted that a talented or professional director is an indispensable requisit of a workers' theatre.

These groups are right from their standpoint. If you undertake to stage a full length five act play, written by a professional playwright for professional actors and for the complicated apparatus of the professional theatre, you need, without doubt, an experienced director to turn out, after weeks of hard work, a tolerable copy of a professional performance. Or if it were our aim to turn out professionals, then we need, again, the help of a well trained professional director. These groups are right from the wrong standpoint toward the Workers' Theatre.

When speaking of certain types of workers' theatres as having wrong attitudes, I do not rely on my own ideas of these groups, but on my experiences in permanent practical work in agit-prop groups, and from study of the activities of highly developed groups in other countries, especially Germany. These experiences prove that we cannot approach, convince, and win the masses by imitating or creating elaborate pieces of art, but by clear, elementary plays written to suit a workers' group, and easily understood by a workers' audience. Therefore, every real agit-prop play should be written so that it can be staged without the help of a professional director.

However, that does not mean that directing is easy and that every member of a theatre group can do it. On the contrary, it requires more practice and more experience than any other function in agit-prop work. Therefore, for the beginning, it is necessary that only those comrades who are the most competent be assigned to this job. For in order to get the best political results, it must always be our aim to achieve the best performances possible.

As long as there are only one or two comrades available for directing, the principle of distribution of functions is correct. But the groups have to overcome the conditions which make them depend upon individual members. Later other members have to be drawn in and trained in directing. This has to be done systematically. The experienced comrades should give lectures and lead discussions on this subject.

Inexperienced comrades must be assigned as assistant directors to function in close connection with and under the supervision of competent directors. Thus through study and practice every member of a group can learn the function of directing a workers' play.

There is very little written on the art and technique of staging a proletarian play. Therefore, it will be necessary to give a thoro analysis of this work.

2) What does "directing a play" mean?

Directing means to complete a play by its performance. The written play is nothing but a fraction, a first step of the performance. It uses only one of the many elements of the theatre--the word. And even this not to the full extent of its expressive power. In the written play the word is only a symbol which grows to full life in the performance--the spoken word. In the play the word has a significance quite different from that of the novel. In the novel the written language is the final expression of the contents. The author of a novel finishes his work. In the play the written language expresses only partly the contents. Therefore the playwright is only the co-author of the final work, the performance. While writing the dialogues and monologues he sees and hears, in his imagination, the voices, movements and gestures of the players, the construction and the colors of the settings, and the sounds of the music. In his work he has already to take into consideration the final performance by making notes for the use of the other elements of the performance such as human voices, movements, colors, sounds, noises and forms. While actually doing the language work he already conceives the work of his co-authors, the director, the actors, the composer, and the stage designer. Which means, the first step of staging is being done in writing the play.

It is, therefore, of importance that the groups who write their own plays assign the directors to the playwriting committees or elect one member of the playwriting committee as director of the performance.

The director cannot start rehearsing the play as he receives it from the author or the playwriting collective. The directing work done while writing makes the play suitable for a performance by workers and for a workers' audience. But it is the task of the director to adapt the play to the special conditions in his groups and of his audience. This means he has to consider the number of members, the proportion of male and female players, the characteristics of the players, the financial and technical means of his group, the localities where the performances will take place, the political and national composition of the audience and, last but not least, the time of rehearsing at his disposal. Not before an exact and detailed staging plan has been worked out is the director prepared to start the work with the players. The better the director is prepared, the clearer and

more distinct are his instructions during the rehearsals, and the better the players can follow him. The more time he spends on the planning, the less time he needs for the rehearsals. And this means a lot for proletarian players who come to the evening rehearsals already tired and worn out from their work in shops, factories and offices.

What usually and erroneously is considered as the only task of the director- the directing of the rehearsals, is only one part, is only the last step of the whole process of directing. And it is mainly on account of this underestimation of the preparatory work that so many workers' performances lack exactness, clearness, imagination and convincing power.

The time and the effort to be spent upon the different parts of the directing process depends on the kind of play to be performed and on the amount of time available in all. But we should keep in mind that it is not only the amount of time we spend but also, and much more, the correct method of work we use that makes a performance successful.

After this analysis of the process of play-directing the articles following will deal with the actual work to be done and with the tasks, problems and difficulties we face passing thru the three stages of development of a performance:

- 1) The fundamentals in the play
- 2) The plan
- 3) The rehearsals

(To be continued)

Narrowing the Field of the Workers' Theatre.

by N. Buchwald

There is fine conciseness in the logical structure of Comrade John E. Bonn's thesis on the Workers' Theatre, printed in the August issue of "Workers' Theatre", and I should have only praise for it if it did not contain one serious flaw that tends to weaken the entire structure.

In Section II, entitled, "Workers' Theatre and Bourgeois Theatre", Comrade Bonn states:

"Workers' Theatre (as a matter of propaganda) approaches the masses of exploited proletarians.

Bourgeois Theatre (as a matter of business) approaches the few rich."

On the basis of this assertion Comrade Bonn is quite correct in concluding that:

"We cannot learn from the bourgeois theatre. We have to build up the workers' theatre from the bot-

tom, learning from experience and self-criticism." The flaw in Comrade Bonn's argument is contained in the phrase to the effect that the bourgeois theatre is concerned only with business and orientates itself on "the few rich".

This is a serious and dangerous underestimation of the bourgeois theatre as a medium of propaganda among the very masses of the exploited proletarians whom we seek to reach thru the workers' theatre.

As a matter of fact, the bourgeois theatre has a definite propaganda mission-- to imbue the masses with a spirit of loyalty and devotion to the political, social, economic and ethical institutions and standards of the ruling class, to keep the masses safe for capitalism. In this respect the bourgeois theatre is as powerful and effective a propaganda tool as the bourgeois press, the church or the radio.

For the purpose of the present discussion we must include in the realm of the theatre the entire vast field of the cinema, with its enormous influence upon the lives of the working masses. Especially in its present stage of technical development (the talkie) the cinema blends and merges with the theatre to form a unified medium for projecting the ideology of the ruling class upon the minds and the lives of the exploited masses. The talkie is nothing but mechanized theatre, using the same literary and dramatic patterns, the same forms and types of dramatic and scenic appeal and the same medium of acting and the spoken word as the so-called "legitimate" theatre. While it is true that the latter depends for its audience mainly upon the upper and middle classes, (more on the latter than on the former) this is not true of the cinema which is organized on the basis of mass production and popular prices. There is not a section of the exploited population which does not fall under the direct influence of this huge network of capitalist propaganda, and there is not another propaganda medium in the hands of the ruling class that compares in its effectiveness, its deep-going impressiveness with the cinema or the mechanized theatre.

Even before the advent of the talkie the bourgeois theatre was a powerful means for the spreading of capitalist propaganda with all its upshots of nationalism, race prejudice, and glorification of the individual who "makes good" in the catch-as-catch-can scramble of capitalist society. It is true that "business", the race for profits, has always been and continues to be the motive power in the bourgeois theatre, but that does not lessen its propaganda value for the ruling class, and it should not blind us to the true social mission of the bourgeois theatre. One may as well say, that we must ignore the bourgeois press because it is run for profit.

If we grant the obvious fact that the bourgeois theatre holds sway over the minds and imagination of the exploited masses,

we can no longer treat it with haughty disdain as something concerning only "the few rich", but on the contrary we must pay it close attention and see if we cannot profit by some of its methods. In every struggle it is the first step in wisdom to learn all about the enemy and to adopt his superior methods of combat. Ideologically we are at war with the bourgeois theatre, and this war is part of the general war between the exploiters and the exploited. As in other fields of this class combat, we seek to win over the masses of the exploited on the side of revolutionary class struggle and proletarian solidarity. There is no denying that the bourgeois theatre (together with other agencies of bourgeois propaganda) has the masses on its side. How are we going to win them over to our side? This is the crux of the problem.

Comrade Bonn proposes to ignore the bourgeois theatre. I think we can hardly afford this attitude. I think we must do the very opposite: examine the bourgeois theatre very closely, learn the methods it employs in its propaganda, learn and--as far as possible-- adopt the technique it uses in making its propaganda effective.

According to Comrade Bonn the workers' theatre must not only begin from the bottom, as far as technique is concerned, but it must remain there. There is something in the theory and practice of the so-called agit-prop theatre that makes a virtue of primitivism. The insistence on simple forms, on banishing scenery, lighting effects, make-up and even expert acting-- all this smacks very much of formalism gone wrong. Furthermore, the insistence upon the agit-prop type of theatre as the only theatre that is worthy of the name "Workers' Theatre" deliberately narrows down the field of the revolutionary proletarian theatre and casts all higher forms of theatrical technique into disrepute as something "of the devil", in our case-- of the bourgeoisie.

This, if Comrade Bonn will pardon me, is puerile. Workers' theatre is characterized by its revolutionary contents, and its value and standing in the field of proletarian culture is determined by its effectiveness in "reflecting (expressing) and promoting (impressing) this culture"; as Comrade Bonn so aptly puts it. The question of technique and of form is merely incidental. There is no denying the value and carrying power of the artless agit-prop groups, when these are expertly trained and guided by competent directors and when the script is direct, vigorous, lucid-- that is, well written. It is also true that agit-prop groups can be trained more easily, require less time and simpler stage paraphernalia than proletarian "art" groups. That agit-prop groups may become valuable auxiliary agencies to the propaganda organizations in the various fields of the class struggle, goes without saying. But to say that only such groups constitute the workers' theatre, and that it is only upon such groups that we must rely to wean the exploited masses away from the bourgeois theatre, is to exaggerate the capacities and potentialities of such groups beyond all reason and at the same time to minimize the great

potentialities of proletarian "art" groups in the field of effective revolutionary propaganda theatre.

Comrade Bonn's position is untenable not because he is so strongly for the artless agit-prop groups (I am all with him in this enthusiasm) but because he is so strongly and fallaciously against higher forms of theatre and other types of expression that are concerned with the same aim: "reflecting (expressing) and promoting (impressing)" the proletarian culture, the ideology of class struggle and class solidarity.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTENT
AND FORM-AN ANSWER.

BY M. BAKER

Prolet-Buehne, N.Y.

"Should a workers' theatre adopt realism, symbolism or mass recitation" was the question raised by the writer of the article "The relationship between content and form" in the Sept. issue.

The workers' theatre cannot adopt a fixed form. It is continuously changing and developing together with the revolutionary movement. The workers' theatre is only at the beginning. At this stage we have to experiment with each form we know of, and can use any form as long as it fulfills its purpose, the purpose of propagandizing the class struggle.

To find the form we first have to study the content, as the content is the primary and the form the secondary subject in the play, consequently, the form has to be fitted to the content. Since the content of our plays is the class struggle, we have to choose a form that expresses this most clearly and can be readily understood by the workers. A workers' theatre has to concentrate on the problem, has to be ready any minute to dramatize up to date questions arising in the class struggle.

In looking for forms we should study the bourgeois theatre as its theatrical methods in attracting the attention of the audience are highly developed. The bourgeois theatre is using many different forms besides the naturalistic play, such as reviews, vaudeville acts etc. The review consists of short scenes of different styles, each scene specializing a particular question to which the form has been fitted. The revue form has been tried out by the Proletbuehne in two revues. In these, problems concerning the class struggle were shown in short scenes of naturalistic and non-naturalistic forms. The form was fitted to the content that was to be presented.

Another question to be considered in connection with the form is

the localities where a Workers Theatre has to play, such as open or indoor meetings, demonstrations and picnics. It is obvious that we cannot stage a naturalistic play at open-air meetings, a mass recitation is the most effective for an open-air meeting. Each word is hammered into the workers and each gesture has its meaning. It is wrong when the writer in the above mentioned article says: "A mass recitation will be weaker than a realistic play, because it effects only one sense." It is for just that reason that the mass recitation can be stronger, because it specializes and concentrates on the content that is to be presented. A mass recitation does not distract the attention of the audience from the content thru any theatrical effects.

The writer states further: "Another reason for a Workers Theatre to use naturalism is the lack of trained actors, and for that reason it has to use type casting." Type casting, I agree with the writer, has to be used in naturalistic plays, but that should not retain a Workers Theatre from using non-naturalism. With a little training every worker will be able to perform in a mass recitation. They do not have to be talented but have to be politically trained and have always to bear in mind, that while acting, they are propogandizing the class struggle.

The Workers Theatre is a weapon in the class struggle and as such cannot only rely on forms taken over from the bourgeois theatre. It has to search for new forms which express the content more clearly and thoroughly.

YOU NEED good plays?
 YOU NEED technical assistance?
 YOU NEED advice in your artistic work?
 YOU NEED contact with the whole Workers Theatre Movement?

T H E N

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PLAYS

"THE FIGHT GOES ON."

Class Play of The Paterson Textile Strike.

by B.Reines,

W.L.T. NEW YORK.

Characters: Workers, Boss, Cop, Labor Faker.

Boss: (Walks in, stops at front-center, then speaks)
I am the boss - I own the shop.

Cop: (same actions as boss)
I am his ready helper - the cop.

Labor Faker: (same actions as boss) (labor faker wears sign A.F.of L.)
I am that extra good strike breaker,
The boss's agent - the labor faker.

(Boss and the others joke and laugh. Boss gives out cigars, looks at watch, sends Cop and L.F. to sides. Boss raises hand. Factory whistle blows. Workers enter from from in single file, and form three rows. Boss gives signal. Workers do work-movements. After 10 times first worker speaks)

1st Worker: We are the workers, who toil all day
In a musty shop, for little pay.

2nd Worker: Our children go hungry, our children go cold
While the boss and his agents grow stuffed with gold.

3rd Worker: We weave and warp and dye all day
In a musty shop, for little pay.

(3 sequences of work movements as unemplyed workers enter from front, walk around at side with hanging heads)

Unemployed
Worker:

We are the unemployed, whose feet,
Are dragging today in every street,
While the boss drives our fellows to longer hours
And the speed up eats away their powers.
Though we, the unemployed, whose feet
Are dragging today in every street,
Must beg and scrape for a bit to eat.

4th Worker: (4th worker takes one step to the side as he begins to speak)
Workers! The time has come to stop,
In spite of boss and faker and cop.
Unite! Strike! Let no loom turn,
Until the wages that we can earn
Are enough to keep a family,
In food and clothing properly
Until we shorten our working day
To leave us a little time for play,
Until our Union is built up so strong
That the boss won't dare to treat us wrong.
Strike!

All workers: Strike! (Workers stop working)

Labor Faker: (After conference with boss comes rushing over with hands up)
No - no! Don't strike! Things aren't so bad!
You have nothing to gain now - better be glad
That you're still alive. And you know, the boss
Is running his business at a loss
Just to make jobs for you and me.
So you see
You'd be making a terrible mistake
By striking now.

4th Worker: What a faker! What a fake!
Wage-cuts, speed up and longer hours
Are forced upon us by the boss
To keep his profits up. Yet you
Tell us workers not to do
The one thing that must be done if we
Are ever to get rid of our misery
Employed and unemployed together
Strike!

5th Worker: Strike!

1st Worker: Strike to-day!

(Workers enthusiastic. Form picket line, singing
"On the line-" and marching.)

Labor Faker: Boss, we must find some other way,
Of keeping the workers down -
(Boss whispers to L.F.) O.K.

Labor Faker: Workers, if you must strike, let me
Be your leader. I can guarantee
To win. The boss is a good friend of mine
When I say something, the boss will say, "Fine!"
So strike with me, The A.F. of L.
Will do the job, and do it well.

(Some workers join the A.F. of L. - stand divided into 2 groups.)

4th Worker: Sure, the boss will say, "Fine!" to the labor fakers.
That the A.F. of L. will sell us out
Their proves beyond all doubt
Workers, divided we cannot win
(Cop brings scab in and goes thru between the 2 groups)
With us divided, the scabs get in.
The cops break up our picket lines
The time has come when we must choose
United, to win - or divided to ~~lose~~
Workers - Unite for victory
(Workers unite just in time to stop Cop from bringing in
another scab. Workers chase Cop and scab off.
Resume one big picket line.)

Labor Faker: Help! Help! Now what shall we do? (Confers with Boss)
We've got to work fast, or else we're thru.
We've got to work fast, and we've got to work hard,
Here goes - pray, brother - it's our last card.
Brothers and sisters, I bring good news
I've settled the strike for you, how's that?
With me as your leader, you'll never lose.

2nd Worker: You've settled the strike? Tell us the terms!

Labor Faker: Terms? - Er - the terms will be settled later
Now, back to work, you weavers and dyers,
You warpers and quillers, back to work
Except for a few that the boss can't use,
(L.F. points out militant workers to Boss, who refuses
to take them back)
There's plenty of time to talk about terms.

4th Worker: See how the faker stammers and squirms
As he tries to conceal the sell-out he's after.
Fellow workers, what do we say to this grafter
This double faced traitor, this expert strike breaker
This tool of the boss, this labor faker?
(Workers drive off Boss, Cop and Labor Faker)

1st Worker: Down with the fakers!

2nd Worker: Down with fake settlements!

3rd Workers: Down with the Union that sells us out.

4th Worker: On with the fight!

5th Worker: On to victory!

1st Worker: Long

2nd Worker: Live

Unemployed
Worker: The Unity of the workers!

1st Worker: Long

2nd Worker: Live

5th Worker: The union that fights for the workers' rights!

All Employed
Workers: Long

All Unemployed
Workers: Live

All workers: The National Textile Workers Union.

(Workers hold up sign as each word is spoken)

(Workers sing "Solidarity--")

The following plays for workers' theatre groups are available at the
Workers' Laboratory Theatre, 799 Broadway, Room 330.

ART IS A WEAPON - a Mass Recitation, subject: culture a weapon of the
working class.

SOLIDARITY - Mass Recitation, subject: W I R

IT'S FUNNY AS HELL - a Play, subject: Unemployment

ANYONE WITH BRAINS - a Play, subject: Unemployment

UNEMPLOYED - a Satire on Unemployment

FIGHT AGAINST STARVATION - a Revue, subject: Miners Strike, Relief

LYNCH LAW - a Play, subject: Scottsboro case.

IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS - an Anti-religious play

THE BIG STIFF - a Satire on Unemployment

THE FIGHT GOES ON, - a play on the Patterson Textile Strike.

Three of a Kind.

by J. Shapiro

W.L.T.

This play can be used for out-door election campaign work.

Characters: Worker, Democratic politician, Republican politician, Socialist.

(Democratic politician and Worker appear on platform. Democrat greets worker meisily, slaps his back, shakes hand)

Democrat: Why Mr. Worker himself. It's certainly good to see you. Well, well, well! It's a year since I've seen you last. What are you doing with yourself. How's the family?

(Enter Republican politician)
Republican: Oh! if it ain't Mr. Worker. (Looks at democrat haughtily)
Beg your pardon sir, Mr Worker is my friend. How is the missus, Mr. Worker and the kiddies? We must see more of each other. It's been quite a long time--

Democrat: (Jostles Republican aside)
I'm sorry to see you looking a little thin. Terrible times we're having. A little too much tariff, I guess, and this damned prohibition. I'll see that we get that fixed.

Republican: (Jostles democrat aside)
Oh, bother the tariff. The tariff's alright. Just a little bit of a depression. Periodic, you know. Quite natural thing. Bound to pass soon. We'll be all right. We're really doing fine under the circumstances. Optimism, that's the trick. Put your shoulders to the wheel and whoop! We'll be out of it in no time. Besides----
(Enter Socialist, dressed in pink overalls)

Socialist: Oh, hello Mr. orker. How do you do (looks disdainfully at Democrat and Republican)
Beg your pardon, Gentlemen. You know me, Mr. Worker, don't you? I am a socialist, your best friend (points coyly to his overalls) I'm certainly glad to see you. Oh, you look quite thin. Dreadful isn't it, the hard times we're having. Too much corruption in government, that's what it is. Our public officials are quite negligent about it. They take too many vacations on pay. Now if you elect me--

Democrat: Oh, so thats it. Don't you listen to him. I've always been the friend of the workers. In fact I'm famous for it.

Republican: That's not true. You know you've always got along very well with me. Whom for instance did the workers elect when they wanted full dinner pails and automobiles - me. Who is generally noted for bringing prosperity - me. Who--

Socialist: Mr. Worker! I charge these gentlemen with insincerety.

Republican &

Democrat: Don't you listen to him. He's too radical.

Socialist: Gentlemen, I protest.

Republican: Don't pay any attention to him.

Democrat: He's a lotto hot air.

Republican &

Democrat: (in chorus)

Here, Mr. Worker, have a cigar on me. (They both shove cigars simultaneously into worker's mouth who remains standing quite stunned)

Socialist: Dear me, how unrefined.

Democrat: Unrefined my eye. That's a swell cigar I gave him. The democrats hand out the best cigars.

Republican: Yeah? What's wrong with the one I gave him.

Democrat: Don't smell so hot, if you ask me.

Republican: Boloney - It's a damn sight better than your rope.

Democrat: Says you?

Republican: Says me!

Democrat: Zat's so?

Republican: Nothing but!

Democrat: Don't get excited! Don't get excited!

Republican: Keep cool! Keep cool!

Democrat: Say! another crack like that and I'll--

Worker: (Who has remained bewildered during all this, is suddenly aroused. He takes the cigars out of his mouth, throws them to the floor and advances towards the three)
Say that's a swell show you boys are putting on. Careful, now. You are liable to make a mistake and hurt each other. What's the fake issue to-day, prohibition, tariff, water power. Come on boys Carry on! I like to listen to jokes. (Three step back and form a huddle)

Republican: Oh! I'm afraid he's turning red on us.

Democrat: He's beginning to look like a communist.

Socialist: (Trembling) Oh - oh- oh.

Worker: Well why don't you fight? You're beginning to act like pals. Don't stop the show.

Republican: Aw, Mr. Worker, this is no way to talk to a friend. You know I like you. Haven't I always voted for a full dinner pail and a chicken in every pot.

Worker: (Turns to audience)

Boloney, that's what he always says before election, but what does he do? Ever since I've put him in office on a prosperity platform, I've been out of work and starving. And Mr. Hoover is conspiring with the bosses to cut wages and is putting every obstacle he can, in the way of unemployment insurance. No Mr. Republican. I guess I'm on to you this year. I've had enough of you.

Democrat: Well, you can't say that about me. Aint I against the tariff, and prohibition? I'm a real friend to the worker.

Worker: Oh, Yeh? You know I once elected your Mr. Wilson on his promise to keep us out of war. (To audience) Did he keep us out of war? No sooner was election over but we found ourselves fighting to make money for the bosses. Millions of us got killed so that the capitalists could get more profits. Those of us who didn't get killed over there came back here to starve. No Mr. Democrat. You've done enough for me. I'm through with you.

Socialist: (Trembling and hugging Rep. and Dem. very closely) But surely Mr. Worker you can't say that about me. I'm a socialist I believe in public ownership. I know you will like me.

Worker: You're a social fascist and a faker. You promise great things but you are a faithful servant of the bosses. I've followed you up in Germany where you've murdered revolutionary workers, and have sold the rest to American and German capital, in England, where you are engineering wage cuts, cutting the unemployment dole, and working to create a fascist dictatorship, and right here in America, in Milwaukee where your socialist mayer-clubs down starving workers as efficiently as the other too.
(To audience)

He looks pretty good where he is. Doesn't he. Yes, three great pals. Three of a kind, faithful servants of the bosses. The only time they put up a battle is when there's some swag to divide. Say you! We don't want you here, get me? So you can pick up your stinking stogies and beat it! Scram! The three of you. (Rep. and Dem. scramble to pick up the cigars and begin to

slink away. Socialist remains enbretingly).

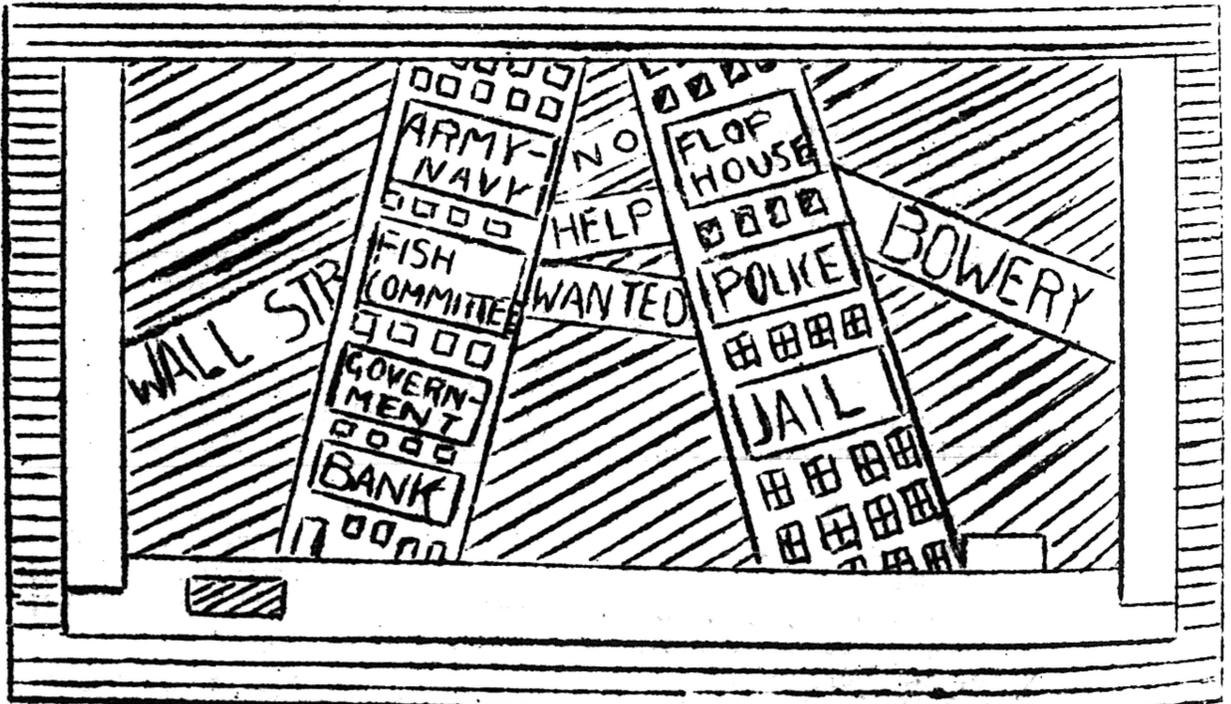
Worker:

(Pushing socialist towards republican and democrat)
Here you fellows. You left something. Take this along with you.
It's yours.

(Turns to audience)

Fellow workers! This year I've been taught a lesson. It was a rather tough lesson. But it has done this much for me. It has taught me the difference between my interests, the interests of the workers, and the interests of the bosses. The three parties whom you have seen kicked off are boss controlled parties.

This year I am voting for an entirely different party. A party which does not hand out cigars at election time, but fights with me and with you all year around in the shops, in the mines, in the mills, against wage-cuts, against starvation, against war, a party through which the workers will eventually free themselves from wage slavery. Fellow workers! Here's your chance, raise your fist, show your strength, vote COMMUNIST.



SETTINGS FOR "WORK OR WAGES" (Prolet-Buehne, N.Y.)
Black and white drawings on grey wrapping paper.
Attached on black curtain.

WORKERS CHILDREN'S THEATRE

THEATRE AT A CHILDREN'S CAMP

by Sidney Ball, W.L.T., N.Y.

I got an idea of the sort of dramatic work being carried on at the proletarian children's camps by visiting the W.I.R. Children's Camp at Wingdale, N.Y. As I climbed the hill to camp, I could see that the "campfire" had already begun. The fire was blazing up and around it in a semi-circle sat the children. This was the first Saturday night the children had been in camp and now the kids were to dedicate their tents. The campers had selected a name for each tent, such as "Krupskaya", "Pittsburgh Miners", "I.L.D.", and now each squad was dramatizing the title of their tent, demonstrating its significance to the rest of the campers.

The "Dnieperstroi" group, for example, put on the following skit: Two of the boys held a blanket in front of the bonfire cutting off its light from the semi-circle of campers watching them. In the shadow of the blanket sat a group of boys illuminated by a dim flashlight. These were Soviet peasants. "Gosh", says one, "I can scarcely see to read a newspaper. I wish we had electricity." "Aw, it's terrible," says another, "I have to work so hard pushing those cars. Look, I got blisters. If we only had electricity that would do the work for us and it would be lots easier."

This is the first scene. The second is the same only this time the boys are a council of soviets discussing the problem of electrification. One of the boys gets up, "Say fellows, what we want to do is to build a big dam on the Dnieper river. Then we'll have all the electricity we want." And so it is decided.

The last scene shows the same group, still in the dark. But the blanket shutting off the campfire is dropped, signifying the completion of the Dnieperstroi project. The group is flooded with light. There is general rejoicing and the boys march off singing the International.

This skit was typical of the rest. All were short, crude, pointed. The most elaborate skit of the evening was the "Big Stiff", a fifteen minute satire on capitalist treatment of the "unemployment disease". This number afforded more amusement than some of the others for it was put on, in costume, by a cast of girls. The plump girl in trousers and a top hat who took the role of Dr. Hoover was particularly laughed at. But altho more elaborate than the others, this skit had less political and educational value. Since

it was originally written for adults many of the lines were not understood by the children and it did not present as clear a view of the class struggle as the plays the kids themselves wrote.

I am told that the method of preparing the skits is as follows: the children discuss the name they have selected for their tent. An incident is picked that illustrates their choice. The parts are decided on: Jimmy will be the I.L.D. lawyer; Abe, the miner in jail, and so on! The lines are not worked out in detail, but the lawyer is told to make a speech suitable to a lawyer and the exact wording is left to him. Usually there is one rehearsal, but probably not more.

Some of the skits, it seems to me, suffer because too little time has been spent on them. One of the purposes of the camp is to give the children political education. These playlets are a very effective means. The kids like to act and in order to find out about the parts to which they are assigned they are forced to gain a good deal of information. If a little more time were spent in preparing the skits I think the children could get even more out of them than they do now.

PIONEERS ARE REHEARSING

a dialogue, reported in the Sept. issue of this magazine as it really happened between Pioneers in the miners strike area. By a few remarkably clever cuts, changes and additions the original interesting, but not "ready to perform" dialogue has been transformed into an effective Pioneer Agitprop play. Asking for the name of the playwright who did this clean job for them, I got the answer: "We don't need no playwright! We do it by ourselves!" - They didn't need a director (like regular Workers Theatres). And what a swell staging they did, with a minimum of props! - They had no star system (like regular Workers Theatres). For the most talented kid had the smallest part and didn't find anything wrong with it. - And last but not least, there was perfect concentration, enthusiasm, and discipline (unlike in some grown-up Workers Theatres).

The grown-up comrade players and directors and organizers are now very busy teaching the children how to play theatre. Fine! But how about, for a change, learning from the children how to play theatre? Not so bad either! - (Performance given by the Yorkville-Pioneers)

NEWS

The Young Textile Pioneers of Paterson who gave their first performances during the strike last month, have organized their permanent Agitprop group, the "Young Communist Theatre". Their first production, a play written entirely by themselves, is published in this issue of the magazine. - Let's hear more from you, Young Communist Theatre! Send in all your plays for publication to "Workers Theatre". - How about the other Pioneer Groups in New York and all over the country? Who is next to organize an own Agitprop group?

FREE FOOD FOR WORKERS' CHILDREN

A play in two scenes.

By the COMMUNARD THEATRE of the
Young Textile Pioneers, Paterson, N.J.

Scene 1 - A Striker's Home.

(Vera and mother getting ready for breakfast)

Vera: We only have a little bread and coffee for breakfast this morning.

Mother: Yes, I am going to the relief station for some food as soon as the picket line is over.

George: (From another room, in a drowsy voice) Time to get up, Mom?

Mother: Yes, if you don't want to miss the morning picket line.

Vera: Mother, did you get shoes and a shirt for Joey yet? He will have to stay out of school again if you didn't.

Joey: (from another room) Yeh, I'll get in dutch if I don't go to school to-day.

(George walks in with his pants and underwear on. Sits down on a chair and starts to put on the rest of his clothes.)

George: Gee, I'm hungry. How about some breakfast?

Vera: Dress yourself first.

George: Aw, shut up and give me some coffee.

(Breakfast is served and the children are seated)

Joey: (entering without shoes or shirt) Why didn't pop come home last night?

Mother: Father was arrested on the picket line yesterday.

Joey: When is he coming out?

Mother: The International Labor Defense will get him out to-day.

(Pause; all continue to eat)

Vera: Hurry up, George, we gotta get on that picket line early today.

George: I'm eating as fast as I can.

Joey: Why is it, ma, Jack gets money for movies and candy and I haven't even got shoes?

Mother: His father is a scab, that's why. But wait till the strikers get hold of him - he'll be using his money for hospital expenses.

Maryy: (entering) Come on or you'll be late for the picket line.
(Children get up and walk to door, Joe stays)

Mother: Hurry up, children, I'll be there as soon as I clean up.
(Children go out)

End of Scene 1.

Scene 2. - in school.

(Children playing tag, etc., Jack stands at door and plays chickie)

Jack: (sees Teacher coming) Chickie!

(All the children sit down. Teacher enters)

Teacher: Good morning, children.

Children: Good morning, teacher.

Teacher: I am very glad to see you so quiet this morning. Before I do anything else I'll take the attendance. Jack ---

Jack: Present.

Teacher: Frances, Jane, (each answers), Vera --- (no answer)
What's the matter with that girl? She's always late.

(Teacher goes on reading the roll. George and Mary are absent, too.)

Teacher: We will now have our history lesson.

(George enters)

Teacher: A fine time to come in. What's your excuse this time?

George: I went on the morning picket line.

Teacher: I am sick of this constant tardiness. Next time you needn't come at all.

George: Well, my father is a striker and I'm going to help him win the strike.

Teacher: Sit down.

(Vera and Mary sneak in and sit down)

Teacher: Now we will continue with the lesson. Jack, what was going on before the Civil War that is not going on now?

Jack: Slavery.

Teacher: That's right.

George: Boloney. That's wrong. Slavery is still going on, only now we are slaves for wages.

Teacher: (cross) Sit down and shut up. Another remark like that and I'll take you down to the principal.

(Teacher notices Vera and Mary)

Teacher: Where were you, Vera and Mary?

Mary: On the picket line where we belong, alongside of our fathers and mothers fighting for higher wages and better conditions.

Teacher: I don't know what to do with you children. If I had my way I'd kick out all the Reds. --- George -- What glorious victory do we celebrate on Armistice Day?

George: We workers have nothing to celebrate Armistice Day for. The World War was no victory for us, because millions of workers and farmers were killed in order to make more profits for the bosses. That's why the bosses want us to help them celebrate Armistice Day.

Teacher: (horrified) Why, George, I am speechless! How dare you talk like that about our glorious country? I'll go down for the principal at once.

(As Teacher turns towards the door, several children rush to Jane, who has fainted)

Vera: Jane's fainted.

Teacher: (walking over) What's wrong with her?

(Several girls answer: "She's fainted.")

Teacher: Jack, call the janitor, while I go for the principal for George.

(As Teacher leaves the room, George to front of room and takes out a petition)

George: You kids know why she fainted - she's hungry, that's why.

Mary: Yes, she told me she didn't have anything to eat since yesterday morning.

George: We've got to stop this sort of thing. (Raising the petition) - Let's all sign these petitions demanding free food and clothing for children of strikers and unemployed workers. To-morrow morning we will all take these to the board of education at City Hall, where we will demonstrate and picket to win our demands. All of us be sure to be there.

(Janitor enters and carries Jane out. Children sign petitions as Teacher and Principal enter.)

Principal: What are you children signing there?

George: We're signing a petition demanding free food and clothing for the children of strikers and unemployed workers.

Principal: This is outrageous! Who is behind all this?

Vera: Us workers' kids made a club, the Young Textile Pioneers, who fight beside our parents in the National Textile Workers' Union.

Principal: What! That Red Union which is trying to break up our good government? Children, I appeal to you to show your loyalty to your country. We will all sing the Star Spangled Banner.

(George and Vera whisper to the other children. As the Principal starts to sing, only a couple of children sing with him. After the first few lines, the other children break in with: "N stands for National All over the U.S.A. T stands for Textile workers Who slave for little pay U stands for Union and Solidarity National Textile Workers Union Will bring us victory.")

and drownout the Star Spangled Banner. The Principal and Teacher sneak out scared.)

Editors' note: This play, altho a straightforward story of a campaign in which the children were actually involved, is, nonetheless, weak from the point of view of propaganda value. An outline for writing children's plays will appear in the next issue of "Workers Theatre."

REVIEWS

"ON TO VICTORY!"

Mass Pageant, produced by the Workers Theatres, N.Y.
Organized by the Dram Bureau of the Workers Cultural
Federation, N.Y.

Reviewed by A. Prentis.

Pageants are an important part of the Workers Theatre since they may be utilized to inspire and arouse tens of thousands of workers during protest meetings or demonstrations. Pageants should therefore receive better attention in staging than the one under discussion received.

The pageant recounts in pantomimic manner the speed-up of workers, the resulting rebellion and organization into T.U.U.L. unions, the loosening of police terror by the bosses; starvation followed by the breaking down of morale (the Red Cross refusing to help as starvation is not an act of God); the arrival of the Workers International Relief with the consequent revival of morale, and victory. An excellent theme, excellently produced. The audience, recognizing in the pantomime their own day-to-day conflicts in the class struggle, responded enthusiastically and many came over after the performance to congratulate the players. Owing to the limited time allowed for rehearsals, however, and to limited technical means, the staging was inadequate in some respects.

First as to masses. These were not sufficient on the huge stage. Comrades in the various groups affiliated with the Cultural Federation ought to turn out in greater numbers to make the pageants a success. Large masses on the stage have a more powerful and dynamic effect.

Second - the signs. These should be large and painted so as to stand out against the background. Lastly - the stage. This, in a pageant, should be centrally located, as in a circus, so as to permit equal vision from all sides. If its location at one end of the hall is unavoidable, the actors and the background should be definitely contrasted with each other. Also, the lights in the audience should have been dark with just a few spots focussing on the stage.

On the whole the performance was inspiring and full of propaganda power. We are looking forward to the November pageant. It should be even better than this one.

"I'LL TELL YOU HOW TO VOTE"

Produced by Workers Laboratory Theatre, N.Y.

Reviewed by Jack Shapiro.

1)

This play/given recently at the Bronx Workers Club by the W.L.T. is especially significant as it marks the first attempt of this organization to speak to the workers in the review or vaudeville style.

The results of this attempt show that this style is to be taken seriously in the work of the Agitprop theatre.

The script of the review is very well planned and the propaganda is pointed and successfully translated into good theatre. It consists of a number of satirical skits, a very good worker's song, and is summed up in a serious and very effective collective report.

The performance, with some minor exceptions, apparently due to lack of sufficient preparation, was well given and very enthusiastically received by the audience.

A very important shortcoming, however, needs some stressing. In employing satire as a means for propaganda a Workers Theatre must be very careful not to fall into low and pointless burlesque. Whatever fun is to be poked at enemies of the working class must tend to show up the role of these enemies and must not be merely funny. Otherwise it is, from a revolutionary point of view a waste and possibly harmful. This fault cropped out in a certain part of the song and dance act of the three socialists and is to be particularly charged to the comrade who played Hillquit. This comrade seemed to have allowed his exuberance to carry him out of the bounds of pointed satire, and gave us a very crude and very funny yiddish comic, which, altho hugely enjoyed by the audience, was not exactly what a politically educated worker sees in Hillquit, not even in his lighter moments.

After all, it was a successful performance, showing that the Workers Theatre can be full of propaganda and entertaining at the same time.

1) published in "Workers Theatre", Sept. issue.

"FIGHT AGAINST STARVATION"

Produced by Workers Laboratory Theatre, N.Y.

Reviewed by Helen Stern.

2)

"Fight against Starvation", played Sept. 5. by the W.L.T. to a crowded house of Russian workers at the Central Opera House, was very enthusiastically received and proved very effective.

2) published in "Workers Theatre", Aug. issue.

The first scene begins with a group of workers coming onto the stage with pick and shovel and miner's cap; that immediately draw interest of the audience. As they start digging each worker tells of his conditions of slavery as compared with the mine operators strutting leisurely and having the best of everything, until finally they throw down their tools and declare a strike. This was done so militantly that it brought a thunderous applause from the audience. Up to this point it was fine. The scene should have ended right there with the comrades marching off as militantly as they throw down their tools. Instead they remained on the stage, forgot, confused by the applause, their last lines, and left in confusion which weakened the scene.

The second scene takes place in the boss's office. It shows the boss' policy of breaking the strike, calling for the unemployed and negro workers to scab. But he does not succeed as all workers are organized in One union, the N.M.U., and refuse to scab. The boss storms and raves until he finds a solution of breaking the strike: STARVATION! This scene carried very well and was put over splendidly.

The play ended with a mass recitation in the form of a call to the audience to "FIGHT AGAINST STARVATION", and an appeal for relief. This should have been brought out like a clarion call, militantly, with strength in every line. Instead it was done weakly, the comrades were not sure of their lines, showing that not enough rehearsals were given this scene. It therefore failed to carry its message across.

Taking the performance as a whole I cannot say it was bad. There are many good points in it. Given a little more rehearsing and all the weak points worked out it would make a powerful Agitprop play.

"DANTON"

Produced by Ufa

Reviewed by E.W. Mareg.

The Cameo Theatre showed a German talking picture called "Danton". When we think of Danton, or any others like Robespierre, St. Just, Marat, etc., we first think of the French Revolution. Since the French Revolution has brought forth Danton and all the others and while it is completely wrong to think that Danton etc. have made the revolution it is absurd to show Danton without giving the spirit of that period that made Danton who he was. This is the fault of the picture. We see Danton the man, his emotions, characteristics, faults and greatness but always in connection with either his friends or enemies and never in connection with the revolution.

It becomes obvious to the one that expects to find the revolutionary spirit of the great French Revolution in this picture that the money proposition was the chief reason for this production.

Fritz Kortner as Danton shows very fine acting, powerful in voice and figure - theatrically real effective. The settings are in some parts very good. But the picture remains just a story and often gives a general wrong impression. The revolutionary spirit is carefully avoided and mainly the private life of Danton is shown.

CORRESPONDENCE

Read this letter THREE TIMES!!!
And DISCUSS it in your group

From "Solidarity Players"
42 Wenonah Str.
Roxbury, Mass.

Dear Comrades:

The "Solidarity Players" organized in Boston some few months ago are able to report to-date 6 fairly successful performances given before working class audiences in halls in Boston and vicinity, and in Camp Nitgedaiget, Franklin, Mass.

The spirit of the group is fine, the interest in the work is steadily increasing. The importance of revolutionary theatricals is becoming more and more revealed to the workers inside and outside the group. Hardly a rehearsal passes by without some workers delegation appearing before us with a request to perform at some workers' celebration or benefit affair.

As comrade Pevzner, our main director, has previously informed you, we have managed to get along thus far with our own material, that is, with material written by some individuals in the group and later criticized and improved upon by the entire group. We are sending you two more pieces of this material in addition to those sent by comr. Pevzner through the New Masses. The pieces are "Boss Teaches Class" and "Gandhi". The latter was played by us twice in Camp Nitgedaiget and once on a boat excursion and proved quite a success.

On the question of writing stuff to suit the aims of a workers' theatre we are beginning to observe an ever greater inclination among the group to do work collectively, to elaborate a theme with the assistance of as many comrades as possible, so as to register the maximum amount of significant class struggle experience and revolutionary insight of the members. The same applies to directing as we no longer feel dependent on our one trained director to the degree that we did when we first started out. We are learning to use our own wits more and more. We make it a special point to mingle with the audience after each performance so as to discuss our plays and playing with workers.

To make our message especially attractive and inspiring to the working class youth is one of our chief aims. To aid youth groups in their dramatic efforts is one of our great ambitions. On this score we can report an understanding with the dramatic section of a recently organized youth branch of the IWO in Roxbury, Mass., to cooperate with them to the fullest extent possible for the good of the cause. We are also aiming to draw in young negro workers into our work and in this we expect some degree of success in the very near future.

In order that we may function properly as a group we elected the following officers: organizer, recording secretary and corresponding secretary, financial secretary. These with the director make up the Executive Committee. In addition to these we elected a script-girl, stage manager, property manager and make-up man. The office of director is often filled by a collegium of three comrades. We are conducting an average of two rehearsals a week, and so absorbing was our interest in our tasks that we suffered no interruption of work during the hot summer weather.

A recent development in our work is the assignment of one evening by-weekly with the sole purpose of reading and discussing plays with a view of selecting and perfecting material for our repertory. We plan to make these evenings socially enjoyable and to invite a few guests from among workers and intellectuals especially sympathetic to our cause.

And now, comrades, we wish to express our gratitude to you for helping in solidifying our group. For notwithstanding the fact that our correspondence with you has been irregular in the extreme, the helpful advice which your letters contained has been of inestimable value to our group.

Appreciating the benefits that are to be derived from a closer contact with you we have decided on the following:

1. To enclose the price for a years subscription to the "Workers Theatre", starting with very first issue, a special bulletin file will be kept by the group.
2. To aim at selling at least five copies of each current issue of the bulletin and to ask you to send us same on consignment.
3. To request you to send us suitable material for performances at this period of the workers' struggles. Pieces of an anti-war and an anti-religious nature would be especially of value. (We have been invited to perform at an anti-religious affair during the coming Jewish holidays and will have similar occasions to play during the Christian holidays.)
4. To send you pieces that the group had itself originated and is either using at the moment or considers for future performances.

And now we send you our warm comradely greetings and ask you to extend the same to all other workers' groups laboring in the same field.

With comradely greetings,
SOLIDARITY PLAYERS
Isidore Levitt, Cor. secr.

This excellent report gives us - for a change - the opportunity to learn from achievements, and not from shortcomings as do so many other reports.

We want to call the attention to a point of special interest and importance: the systematic efforts to create a close contact between the group and the audience. A task neglected by almost every group. It is a wrong policy, to appear to perform and to run away. We have to mingle with the audience in order to hear their criticism, to talk over with them - the political problems dealt with in our play.

From: Brighton Beach Workers' Club
140 Neptune Ave
Brighton Beach, N.Y.

Workers' Theatre Magazine,
Dear Comrades,

It may interest you to know that the Workers' Laboratory Theatre has cooperated in organizing a Workers' Chorus in the Brighton Beach Club. The present membership of the chorus is 15.

We have found that in looking for the music of the revolutionary songs it was practically impossible to obtain it anywhere. We hope that you will publish the music for these songs from time to time, also the music of some new songs that we may compose in the future.

We are interested in the activities and experiences of other Workers' Choruses. We hope you will publish such news.

Comradely yours,
Secretary,
Workers' Chorus.

There will be always space open for news and articles not only concerning Workers' Choruses but also other forms of proletarian musical activities.

NEWS

THE WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL OF NEW YORK had its opening session on Wednesday, Sept. 16th. Delegates of 14 theatre groups were present. Including the guest delegates there was a total attendance of about 50. Com. Segal, who just came back from Moscow, gave a detailed report on the International Workers Theatre Conference. The report, an interesting survey of the activities of the Workers Theatres on an international scale, containing many valuable suggestions for the groups in this country, has been multiplied by the Dram Bureau and is being distributed among the various theatre organizations. After the report has been discussed in the various groups, a general discussion on the report and the suggestions of the groups will be held in the Dram Council. - Com. Bern, chairman of the Dram Bureau of the Workers Cultural Federation, gave a report on the activities and tasks of the Dram Bureau. He emphasized that the Dram Bureau considers itself as a temporary institution, to function only until the formation of the Workers Theatre Union of the U.S. A re-organization plan presented by the Dram Bureau provides a subdivision of the Bureau into the following departments: organization, repertory, artistic, and publicity. The Bureau suggested

that the Dram Council ratify the 6 members elected by the Workers Cultural Conference and elect 7 additional members for the Dram Bureau. A special committee was elected in order to work out a plan of action for the activities of all New York groups in the election campaign. A motion was passed that all delegates should move in their groups for active participation in the election campaign. - One of the most interesting and most valuable features of the meeting were the reports of the delegates on the activities, problems and shortcomings of their groups. In the future much more time is to be spent on the discussion of these reports. For the activities of both Dram Council and Dram Bureau must be based on the problems and immediate needs of the various groups. - The first meeting of the NY Dram Council left the impression that this body of delegates will do some really useful work for the affiliated Dram Groups, for the Workers Theatre Movement of this country and for the whole revolutionary movement.

LOCAL WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCILS should be formed by now. We are expecting with great interest their reports and suggestions!

PHILADELPHIA - The Workers Theatres of Philadelphia and the organizations which intend to form Theatre groups should get in touch immediately with Com. Roznikov, c/o Workers International Relief, 929 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL OF NEW YORK
Second Session

Wednesday, Oct. 7th 1931 8.30 p.m. sharp
at the Workers Center, 35 East 12th Street, New York

Important order of business: election campaign, re-organization of the Dram Bureau, discussion on International Workers Theatre Conference.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS are coming in very irregularly. The News section must become the current account of the activities of the various groups in the country. Appoint a comrade to send out your monthly reports so that they reach the Magazine not later than the 21th of the month. Each report should include the following items:

1. Total of performances during the month. Names of organizations for which you played.
2. Titles of plays.
3. Bookings for coming month.
4. New plays in rehearsal,
5. Special activities, experiments and experiences.

BORO PARK DRAM SECTION (Engl. sp.)

This group, only recently organized by the Workers Laboratory Theatre, has already made its first production, an anti-militarist play. The next production will be the election revue: "I'll tell you how to vote".

PROLET-BUEHNE (German Agitprop Troup, N.Y.)

- The group gave 7 performances in September, of which 3 were before English and mixed audiences, 2 before Jewish audiences, 1 before Hungarians and 1 before Scandinavians. There was no performance before a German audience. 2 performances were given outside New York, 5 in the City. At one affair the group performed a full length program including: Prolog, The Belt, Work or Wages, Liberty, Tempo, Teapo! and the collective report "The story of the nine Negro Boys in Scottsboro". - The group decided to cooperate with the English speaking groups in doing election propaganda on the streets. The regular program will also be tied up with the election campaign by a collective report popularizing the election issues of the Communist Party.

AT LAST ON THE STREET! - While the Workers Laboratory Theatre is still doing indoor-propaganda and the German Prolet-Buehne is performing its pantomimes in halls, the youngest Agitprop troupe, the Sparks, group of the Young Communist League jumped right into the streets and gave three successful agitprop performances. The audience enthusiastically followed not only the play but also the group into their headquarters. A historical event in the Workers Theatre Movement of U.S.A.

WORKERS LABORATORY THEATRE, N.Y.

The group has excepted a play by Will Lee, based on a chapter in Russia's New Primer, explaining the workings of capitalism and the reason for overproduction and unemployment. The play is cleverly adopted and is called "Mr. Fox, Mr. Box and Mr. Nox". It is being cast at present and there are a few parts still open. - The playwright group will meet every Monday, 8 P.M. at 799 Broadway, Room 330. All workers are invited.

WORKERS BUILD YOUR OWN THEATRE!

The Workers Laboratory Theatre of the W.I.R. needs more members. A busy winter faces us. The W.L.T. is participating in the election campaign. Then, the W.L.T. will be on the job in the coming strikes putting on plays and entertainment for the strikers or organizing groups of strikers to put on their own plays. - W.L.T. Dram-Organizers have already done work in the Miners' strike and in the Paterson Textile strike. In strikes in New York City we shall be able to do much more if more workers join the W.L.T. - We shall hold frequent symposiums and social affairs. Our playwrights, directors and actors are functioning. But WE NEED MORE MEMBERS! Experience is not necessary. - WORKERS OF NEW YORK! JOIN THE W.L.T.! Come to 799 B'way, ROOM 330. - - - W.L.T. Organization Committee.

A WORKERS MUSIC PUBLICATION - The Workers Music League, a section of the Workers Cultural Federation is publishing a series "Music for the Masses". The first publication will be the song "Comintern", composed by Hanns Eisler, the foremost German revolutionary composer. This song had circulation of 300 000 copies alone in the Soviet Union. The American edition carries complete instruction for performance so that it can easily be used by Workers Chorus and Theatre Groups. Single copy 10 cents. Special rates for organizations. Orders can be placed now with "Workers Theatre", 799 Broadway, Room 330, N.Y.C.

MORE MATERIAL FOR AGITPROP PLAYS! There has just come off the press a new pamphlet, "Graft and Gangsters" by Harry Gamco. This excellent pamphlet exposes the cooperative activities of gangsters and police in breaking strikes, murdering militant workers, the attack on foreign born and Negro workers and maintaining the rule of fascist A.F. of L. officials. This pamphlet must become a part of the arsenal of every Workers Theatre group! It may be secured from "Workers Theatre", 799 B'way, Room 330 at 10 cents a copy or \$1.- for 12 copies.

THE COMMUNIST ELECTION PROGRAM FOR 1931 is now available. It is published in a pamphlet that combines completeness of subject matter with brevity of expression. It brings in only 25 pages first: a clearly arranged list of the demands of the Communist Party, and second: a bird's eye view of the whole capitalist system. No member of a dramatic group can afford to miss reading this pamphlet, for it contains just the material which Agitprop groups need - not only for the election campaign, but for the entire year. (Price 2¢)

AGITPROP GROUPS IN THE GERMAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF 1930. - The following figures from Germany give an idea of what well organized and disciplined Agitprop groups can accomplish: 19 groups gave 349 performances over a period of 25 days. This is an average of 3 performances every 4 days. These 349 performances were distributed as follows:

Rural districts	86
Tenements and backyards	61
Public squares	14
Shops	31
Halls	157
	<hr/>
	349

The 349 performances were seen by a total audience of 180 000. Collections for election fund amounted to 2500 Marks, and the sale of pamphlets, 800 Marks. - Following the normal practice of these groups of enrolling workers into the various revolutionary organizations, they took applications for

<u>Organizations:</u>	<u>New Members:</u>	
C.P. Germany	300	by 11 troupes
Y.C.L.	120	by 7 troupes
I.L.D.	375	by 5 troupes
W.I.R.	280	by 5 troupes
Revol. Unions	66	by 2 troupes

One troupe had a discussion at a meeting of a National Socialists (Fascists) and sold pamphlets. Another group gave a performance at a Socialist meeting and collected after the performance 14.50 Marks for the I.L.D.

The troupes are working along the correct line. With one exception: There were not enough shop performances. The reason was that the comrades-players were not available in the afternoons because they were working. They overcame this by forming groups of unemployed

IN THE RED SPOTLIGHT

AN INTERESTING DIALOGUE

between a representative of the Prolet-Buehne and the secretary of an I.L.D. Branch is worth-while reporting:
"When are we supposed to play?"
"Not after 3 o'clock!"
"Why so early?"
"After 3 o'clock the crowd arrives and we want to do some business!"

This is just an example of the little understanding many mass organizations have of the tasks of the Agitprop groups. Why does not the T.U.U.L., or the W.I.R., or the I.L.D., or the F.S.U. give certain Agitprop groups assignments to write and perform plays broadcasting the tasks and necessity of these mass organizations and winning new members for them? They have a powerful propaganda instrument at their disposal and use it as entertainment in their affairs. Here is a problem that should be considered by the Dram Bureau.

"MORE FUN IN THE REHEARSALS!"

should be the slogan for our future Agitprop work. The rehearsals of the last mass pageants revealed a danger towards exaggerating discipline. Something must be done! We therefore recommend the following rules for rehearsals of mass pageants:

1. Show up at all rehearsals sharp 9.15, when they are scheduled for 8.30. When the rehearsal lasts past ten o'clock - kink!

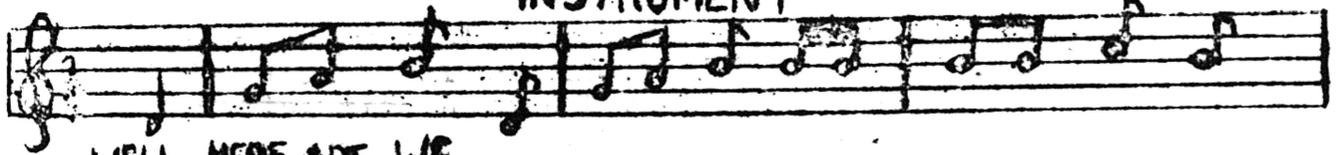
2. At 9.30 go to a Cafeteria and have a cup of coffee. By all means leave just when you are needed in the rehearsal.
3. Take important parts (insist on them if necessary), and assure the director that you are reliable, but attend only every 2nd or 3rd rehearsal, so that the director has to recast again and again.
4. In case you want to come to the performance, tho you have a leading role, don't show up earlier than one minute before the play starts. What a thrill when nobody knows, until the last minute, whether the performance will take place or not!
5. While the director is explaining something, talk to your comrade players. There are many opportunities for private conversations during the rehearsal. Don't miss them! Good jokes are also in place!
6. Hold the rehearsals up as much as possible. But don't stand for too many and too lengthy rehearsals.
7. Explain to all comrade players that the director is a tyrann and a nervous wreck!
8. Blame the director when the performance is a flop!
9. Fight against discipline, as it forms, together with enthusiasm and clearness, the foundation of success and victory!
10. Consider the Workers Theatre as a private amusement and broadcast the slogan: "More Fun in the Rehearsals!"

"I'LL TELL YOU HOW TO VOTE"

AN ELECTION REVUE

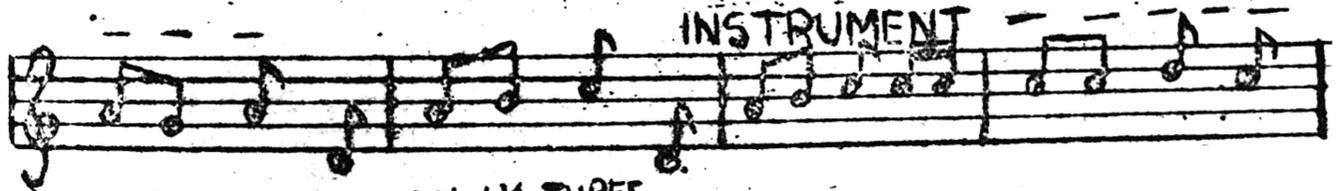
SONG OF THE THREE SOCIALISTS

INSTRUMENT



WELL HERE ARE WE

INSTRUMENT



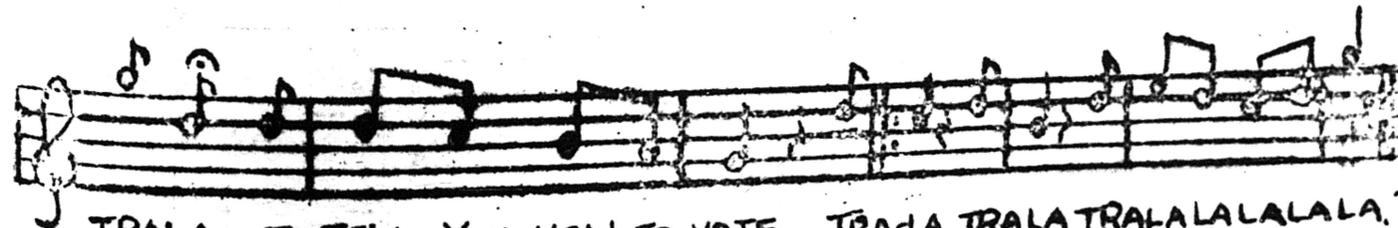
THE JOLLY THREE



ELECTION TIME IS DRAWING NEAR; WE COME



TO YOU IN AW AND FEAR, TO TELL YOU HOW TO VOTE



TRALA; TO TELL YOU HOW TO VOTE. TRALA TRALATRALALALALALA.

PUBLISHED IN "WORKERS THEATRE", SEPT. ISSUE.

A COMRADE FROM PHILADELPHIA WRITES TO US:

"At the next meeting of the John Reed Club I shall propose to the Club to subscribe to the "WORKERS THEATRE" and suggest to all other groups to do likewise. A publication of this character is a very vital force in building up the Workers Theatre Movement, and I have every reason to believe that most of the groups will subscribe."

This is only one of the many letters we receive every day. And the Philadelphia comrades mean what they say: the first subscription followed this letter only a few days later.

ORDERS FOR BUNDLES are coming in greater number every week. New York groups such as Estonian Dram Club, Hungarian Dram Club, Ukrainian Dram Circle responded splendidly by ordering bundles. Groups such as Workers Laboratory Theatre, Prolet-Buchne, I.W.O.-Dram Sections and Jewish Workers Clubs' Dram Sections doubled their sales during Sept. The new organized English speaking Dram Sections in Boro Park and Brighton Beach are doing fine work by selling 20 copies and more a month.

WHERE ARE THE OTHER GROUPS?

HOW ABOUT DETROIT, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES AND SOME OF THE OTHER NEW YORK GROUPS?

APPOINT ONE COMRADE OF YOUR GROUP TO TAKE CARE OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE "WORKERS THEATRE"

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