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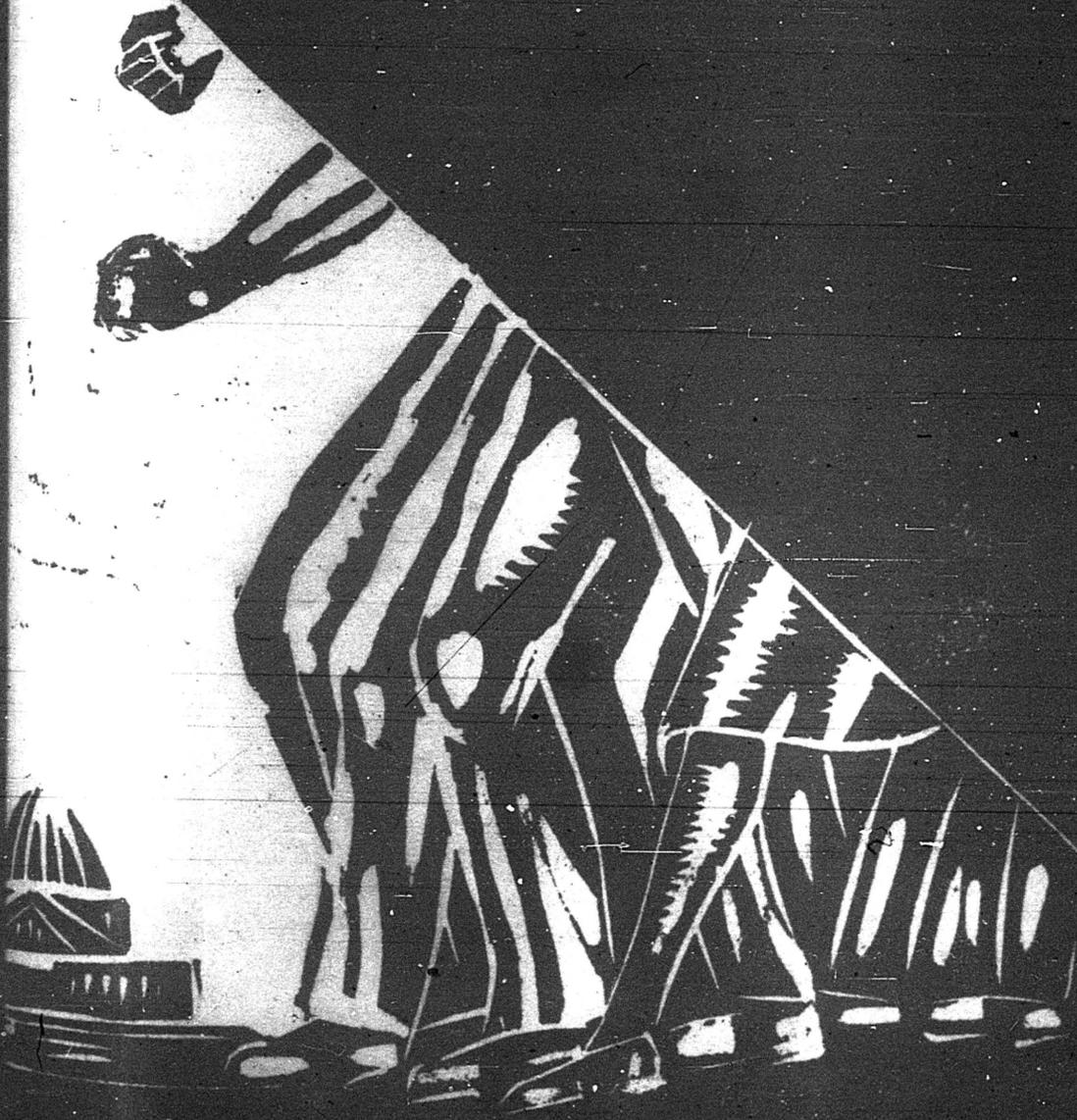


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EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
of Vassar College

WORKERS' THEATRE

DEC. 1931



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

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THEATRE
IS
A
WEAPON

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' THEATRE
AS REPORTED AT THE FIRST ENLARGED PLENUM OF THE I.W.D.U.

by B. Rains, WLT, NY

This Plenum (full meeting) of the International Workers' Dramatic Union was held in Moscow, U.S.S.R., from June 25th to July 2nd, 1931. Delegations were present from seven countries--Soviet Union, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, France, England, Japan and the United States. The order of business included a general political report by Diamant, reports on various national workers' theatres, confirmation of the constitution of the I.W.D.U., and the first World Congress and Olympiade of the I.W.D.U., to be held in August, 1932. In this article we have space to consider only the theses adopted on The Results and Prospects of the International Workers' Theatrical Movement.

The importance of these theses is well stated by general secretary Diamant: "The fighting methods of the Workers' Theatre are vital, simple and comprehensible to every worker. In this lies the significance of its success. The decisions of the Presidium meeting of the I.W.D.U. sum up the experiences acquired in this struggle. They map out a theoretical basis and perspectives for the further development of the theatrical movement. On the basis of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the role of the theatre in the class struggle, the decisions of the I.W.D.U. Presidium meeting map out concrete ways and means for the further development of the Workers' Theatre in all countries. The immediate task of the I.W.D.U. affiliated Sections is to popularize these decisions among the wide working masses..... All of the I.W.D.U. affiliated Sections must take concrete steps for carrying out these decisions....."

The theses begin by contrasting the decay of bourgeois culture as part of the general crisis of the capitalist system, with the tremendous achievements of proletarian mass art in the Soviet Union. In the capitalist countries, the workers' theatre is repressed and persecuted. In the land of the proletarian dictatorship the Soviet has released and stimulated the enormous creative energy of the masses. New forms of mass theatrical art are being developed in which hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and collective farmers are taking part.

On the question of what is happening in the workers' theatre in capitalist countries there is a thesis of special importance: "A process of the transformation of stationary workers' theatres into agit-prop groups is proceeding in various countries (France, America, Belgium). This process shows: a) that the proletariat cannot, in conditions of a capitalist society, create its own stable economically secured theatre; b) that the workers' theatre, which has come out of the womb of the working class, has to win anew the lost confidence of the

working masses. It wins this confidence by going to the masses. THE BASIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' THEATRE IS THAT FORM WHEREBY IT GOES THERE WHERE THE MASSES ARE TO BE FOUND. (Emphasis-B.R.) The growth of confidence in such theatrical forms may lead to it that under certain conditions, the masses will one fine day return to the stationary theatre. It is necessary to emphasize that the proletariat, which on no single section of the front voluntarily limits its means of struggle, will also make use in the theatrical movement of all the methods at its disposal."

The workers' theatres of almost all countries are increasing in political significance and influence on the working masses because of their increasing participation in the economic and political struggles of the proletariat. And with the growth of its influence, the workers' theatre undergoes increasing repression and persecution by fascists and social-fascists. In Poland, Italy and Latvia the workers' theatre has been driven underground. The Social-Democratic (socialist) police-chief Grzhesinsky has prohibited the appearance of agit-prop groups in Berlin and other German cities. The groups of course continue to function.

Among the serious shortcomings of the workers' theatre, first comes: "The insufficient political and artistic education of both the functionaries and the members of the individual sections of the I.W.D.U. This circumstance results, on the one hand, in a superficial attitude to the material worked out by the groups, and leads, on the other, to the groups often not being able to appear with a proper essential programme at times of the most important campaigns. It is necessary immediately to begin educational work among all members of the sections, connecting it with practical work. The center of gravity of the whole of this work must be carried over to the political education of the members of theatrical organizations and groups.

Other serious shortcomings include: The slowness of the transition to agit-prop methods (as in America and Belgium); the underestimation of the workers' theatre by the revolutionary movement as a whole (for which the workers' theatre is not very much to blame); the lack of unified central organizations in most countries (including America); and the weak contact with other workers' cultural organizations (writers; artists, labor-sports, etc.).

The theses declare that the inevitability of the intensification of the crisis, with the sharpening of the class struggle that must follow, makes it more important than ever that the workers' theatre penetrate the working masses--- the chief slogan, "Face towards the factories." At the same time, the importance of the agricultural workers to the success of the revolutionary movement in many countries makes it important that the workers theatre extend its activities into the villages, seeking to form agit-prop groups from among the farming youth.

Large masses of workers who are little class-conscious are members of various artistic organizations-- musical, sports, etc. It is therefore of great importance to draw them into theatre work, thus developing their class-consciousness. Sympathetic petty-bourgeois artists and intellectuals, who are being shaken loose in large numbers by the crises, should be drawn into the workers' theatre.

Important organizational problems include: The establishment of a single national centre for the workers' theatres of a given country (in American, regardless of linguistic differences); arrangements for systematic reports by the various groups to the central organization; establishment of revolutionary competition between the various groups on the basis of special agreements. "It is necessary that the agit-prop groups should adapt their plans to the main political campaigns and the economic struggles of the proletariat."

The growth of the workers' theatre movement raises sharply the question of the systematic theoretical preparation of experienced and Marxistically educated leaders. "In the education of cadres, we must start from the principle that the basis of methodical and artistic preparation is political preparation." Special courses should be organized. Among the students of the Institute of Red Professorships a few places are to be held at the disposal of the workers' theatrical movement in capitalist countries.

The present repertory famine that the workers' theatre movement is experiencing in most countries makes important the creation of a new repertory in every country. "With the object of the creation of the repertory it is necessary also to organize cooperation with neighboring organizations such as those of writers, artists and musicians."

The press needs to devote much more space to the question of the workers' theatre. It is necessary to establish a press bureau on a national and international scale; also to establish contact with worker-correspondents and cultural circles in order to develop worker-critics.

Finally, steps are to be taken to change the bulletin of the I.W.D.U. into a regularly published journal; also to publish works on questions of the workers' theatre, and to develop the method of correspondence courses on these subjects.

These, in summary, are the theses. Every workers' theatre group should take them up carefully, asking themselves-- Which of our particular weaknesses are brought out here? What steps can we take to strengthen ourselves?

It is plain that the workers' theatre in America is yet far from being a mass weapon of the workingclass. A beginning has been made in a few places. Some of the more important immediate steps suggested by the experience embodied in these

theses are:

(1) More widespread adoption of such dramatic forms as enable the workers' theatre to go to the masses. This calls for short plays, requiring little scenery, plays that can be put on in small halls, without stages if necessary, and even in the streets. Groups in the vicinity of strikes should seek to perform appropriate plays before the strikers. Groups should participate in the raising of funds for strike relief, etc. Some groups have already gone in this direction, as reports in WORKERS' THEATRE have shown.

(2) More direct reflection in our repertory of the particulare struggles that occur in this country-- always against the background of the great proletarian successes in the Soviet Union. Thus the National Hunger March should have been widely dramatized. So with great mass strikes (as in mining and textiles), unemployment struggles, the war danger against the Soviet Union.

(3) Establishment of a Workers' Dramatic Union of the U.S.A. Steps are already being taken in this direction by the Dramatic Section of the Workers' Cultural Federation, which has been entrusted with this task by the I.W.D.U.

(4) Drawing in of writers and artists. Groups should make invitations to organizations of writers where these exist, and to individuals, asking them to come and discuss the specific needs of the workers' theatre. Theatre groups should seek the collaboration of workers' choruses, workers' bands, etc.

(5) Establishment of systematic political and artistic education, with reading and discussion of Marxist literature at regular periods.

(6) Sending in of reports of all performances and of useful experiences to WORKERS' THEATRE.

WRITING FOR THE WORKERS THEATRE.

by Jack Shapiro, W.L.T., N.Y.

The principals involved in the writing of an agitprop play revolve not only about the very tangible immediate problems such as clarity, time, space, correctness of political line, technical scope of the workers theatre etc., but also about the somewhat less tangible but nevertheless unavoidable problems of play and theatre in general.

It is necessary here to point out that the problems in the first category simple tho they seem are not to be carelessly disposed off. They necessitate a thorough political grounding on the part of the worker-playwright and also actual practical experience in our theatre; while the problems in the second category tho somewhat hazy and difficult to treat at a glance are by no means inaccessible to the worker tho they require of course serious study and above all the growth which comes with actual work. Moreover the two problems upon closer study overlap and the former simplifies the latter considerably.

For example let us say we are confronted with the definite task of writing an agitprop play on the impending imperialist war to be performed in workers' halls and clubs. We see immediately that our play must adapt itself to a set of given conditions.

As issues, the political line, the average playing accommodations of workers' halls, the character of our audiences, our own financial and technical limitations are pre-determined for us. In other words we already have something very definite to go by.

These instead of being difficulties, should be regarded as a very fortunate state of affairs for us. It at once takes us out of the realm of those divinely gifted playwrights who squat, squeeze out of themselves a few inspired ideas and makes of our work a very practical vocation. It means that we can now view our work as a progressive step by step with the same solidly based approach as the engineer, for instance, builds the bridge that he is building. Because it is controlled by elements almost as finite as those that confront him.

Form, style, all these awe-inspiring so-called aesthetic problems emerge for us from behind that hazy nebula which a bourgeois approach has followed about them and become clear and significant. We acquire a scrupulous economy in our writing because having a definite idea to treat with less patience with superfluities. We acquire simplicity in our technical producing methods because we have neither the time nor the means to indulge in elaborate trimmings. Our approach to style is based on definite factors inherent in our theme and audience.

We will also acquire eloquence and proficiency because he who has a message to carry must in time find the words and means to do so effectively.

All this should tend to encourage us and stimulate us in our work, but it should also make us conscious of certain well defined responsibilities. Since playwriting has cast off for us its self-induced halo and has become a trade, we must make it our business to learn that trade. Our responsibilities are much greater than those of the bourgeois playwright.

Events of class struggle follow each other at present at a fast and furious pace. Our theatre must catch each as it comes and stand ready and competent for the next. If something important is missed, something important is lost. This means preparation.

We should make it our business to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with the tools of our trade. We should give a thorough political analysis to our thematic material. We should study our audience and its reactions. We should learn to conform to the scope of our stage and actors. We should study and learn from the experience of our comrades in other countries who are working in the same field. But above all we should work, because in the last analysis this is the way we grow.

"WORKERS THEATRE" MUST BE PRINTED

REVOLUTIONARY COMPETITION

----- has started!

The PROLET-BUEHNE, German Agitprop Troop, N.Y. pledges itself to sell 50 copies of "WORKERS THEATRE" during the month of December. The PROLET-BUEHNE challenges the WORKERS LABORATORY THEATRE to sell an equal number during the same time.

The WORKERS LABORATORY THEATRE accepts the challenge of the PROLET-BUEHNE, and pledges itself to sell 50 copies of "WORKERS THEATRE" during December.

WHAT OTHER GROUPS are doing their part in the drive for a PRINTED "WORKERS THEATRE"?

WHO CHALLENGES

WHOM

NEXT?

REPORT TO "WORKERS THEATRE", 16 West 21st Street - New York City,

OUR THEATRE IS BORN

A. Prentis

W.L.T., New York

Writing in the November issue of the Theatre Arts Monthly under the title, "A Theatre is Born", Hallie Flanagan describes the rise and development of the workers' theatre in the United States. She writes with sympathy (for which we are grateful) but she does not altogether understand us.

When she says she is surprised that our plays do not praise the splendor of work as they do in Soviet Russia she gives herself away. Sympathetic though she is, she does not seem to grasp the fact that though the two theatres, the Soviet and ours, are both aiming at the unity of the workers of the world, they are at two different stages-- Soviet Russia, at a socialist stage, where the workers, producing everything for themselves, are urged to work for themselves. We here are producing everything for the capitalists-- shall we urge the workers to make the bosses richer?

We also believe in the splendor of work, because we are workers. At the same time we recall that every day more workers are thrown out of work, more are starving, more commit suicide, more negroes are lynched, more families are broken up when their men are deported, more wages are cut to the starvation point. Shall we urge our audiences to take pride in their work or shall we urge them to organize in order to change these inhuman conditions?

Hallie Flanagan thinks the workers' theatres are childish, repetitious, violent and lack art. Of the performance at the Cultural Convention she thinks as childish but admits that the audience was delighted. Yet that audience was composed of the advance wing of our cultural movement, many of whom have studied with the Bakers and the Simonsons, have served their apprenticeships in the "art" theatre, found the bourgeois theatre wanting and finally came over to the workers' theatre. And they enjoyed this "childish" performance. Apparently viewpoints have changed.

She claims we are repetitious-- we are-- though no more so than the bourgeois theatre with its bedrooms-- we must be repetitious so as to impress upon the workers our message of solidarity. She claims we are violent-- shall we talk of hyacinths and eternal beauty while Cardinal Daugherty (the Rev. Dribble in "Funny as Hell") thinks the "depression" is a blessing in disguise, bringing the flock back to the church; while Frances Perkins urges the rich to rebuild their yachts and their sunken gardens; while Samuel Insull thinks that a line of applicants waiting for a job is a good stimulus for a man's efficiency; while Hoover in his Thanks-

giving declaration urges us to be thankful "because we have been blessed with abundant harvests, and the health of our people has increased"-- while the breadlines lengthen and thousands of men and women will starve and freeze this coming winter?

She says we lack "art". What is art? Does art mean "finish"? Or does art mean effectiveness? The writer witnessed a performance of "Electra" with Margaret Anglin several years ago. The audience sat silently thruout the entire performance, applauded it politely, thought it was great and interesting, went home and promptly forgot it. Many of our plays performed before audiences of workers move them to such an extent that they forget they are witnessing a play and begin to participate spontaneously in the performance. Which of the two above mentioned performances is more effective, is better theatre?

Apparently our viewpoints differ as to what constitutes good theatre. Why? Because Hallie Flanagan still thinks in terms of the bourgeois theatre while we think in terms of workers' theatres; because she does not seem to grasp the fact that we have a new factor in our theatre, a new actor in our plays that the other theatre has not-- the audience. By making the audience participate in our performance, by giving expression to their wishes, we eliminate the necessity of putting into our productions that "art", those fine touches that the bourgeois theatre looks for and that are the all in all in that theatre. If we cannot get literary plays, we get along without them, we can paint our characters with single strokes. We do not need revolving stages or make-up or elaborate sets, we merely suggest, the audience amplifies the remainder far better than all our realism could do. Then as far as OUR audience is concerned our theatre is not childish and doesn't lack "art", because our theatre is the expression of the audience itself; because in our theatre the audience receives a symbolic fulfillment of its wishes and hopes. And if according to standards of the bourgeois theatre we are childish-- what matter?

Not that we don't want to have our performances "finished", not that we don't intend to use all of the so-called "arts of the theatre". We will learn to use them and adapt them for our own purpose. But we must bring out the content in our plays right now, and one cannot make that content stand out when there is a chaos of machinery and sets and lights. Besides, we have not much time to rehearse, also the plays change from day to day-- and if we can utilize the imagination of the audience, why not utilize it? It is far more effective and it is cheaper at the same time.

In concluding, Hallie Flanagan says, "It is only in the event of their success, we (the present theatre-A.F.) will become an involuntary audience." Involuntary? The destructive effects of capitalism are ruthless and far-reaching, and as the so-called depression continues, all the theatre workers will become wage slaves, and exploited, will come to our performances

and like them. For unlike the panicky Hamlet, the symbol of the bourgeois theatre, puzzled whether to be or not to be, our theatre will be marching forward with the masses, will point the way, and urging the solidarity of the workers of the world, will hold a promise of bread, peace and hope.

PROBLEMS OF PLAY-DIRECTING

J. E. Bonn

Frolet-Buehne, N. Y.

(continued from Oct. issue.)

3) The Playwright as Director

In the first part of this article, which analyzes the three steps of the process of play-directing, we found that "the first step of staging is being done in writing the play." The playwright is also director.

The technique of playwriting is closely connected with the technique of the stage. We cannot write a play that can be effectively produced or that is suitable for a performance by a workers' theatre at all unless we are thoroly acquainted with the technique of the workers' theatre and apply this technique when we write the play.

Here lies the reason why so many of our writing comrades, especially our professional proletarian writers, have failed up to now to contribute to the repertory of the workers' theatre. They do not know the apparatus of our theatre. But here lies also the reason why quite a number of plays written by individual comrades or collectives belonging to workers' theatre groups are not suitable for effective workers' theatre performance: the authors of these plays know well the technique of the workers' theatre but they put this knowledge and experience aside the very moment they begin to write.

But there is a third failure which may be worse than the failure of not knowing or neglecting the technique of our theatre. This is the tendency in some plays to overdo the technique, to use this technique of the theatre in order to produce certain stimulating effects independent of the political content of the play. To add a sentimental song only because it is effective, to put in a joke only because it creates a feeling of laugh, to produce a situation just because it creates a feeling of curious expectation in the audience, means to use the technique for technique's sake. Theatre technique and theatre effects are only a means to express our political contents clearly and impressively.

To write a play as director means to write such plays which can

be produced, and performed effectively. Already in the selection of the contents and in the laying out of the plan we have to consider the actual situation and possibilities of the groups in this country. The groups are composed of workers who do the theatrical work in their spare time. Most of them are also active in other proletarian organizations. That means very little time for rehearsals. Plays which require too much time for preparation should not be written at all. Short scenes to be produced after three or four rehearsals are the best material for our groups.

Casting is another problem of the workers' theatre. Most of the groups consist of eight to twelve members. Our plays must be adapted to this condition. A play should not contain more than six to eight characters, or if more, it must be possible for some players to take two or three parts. Plays for two to four characters are even better because this gives the groups the opportunity to play at the same time at different places. The success of the Prolet-Buehne with the two-character play "Liberty in U.S.A." proves that this type of playlet can be very effective.

Another fact which our playwriting comrades have to count with is that the worker-players are not, and are not supposed to be, professional actors. In contrast to the professional actor who has to give up his own personality in order to express the emotion and thoughts of a being created by the author of the play, the proletarian player has to retain his personality in order to express as powerfully as possible his own revolutionary feelings and ideas. In the theatre he can do this in two ways: first, appearing as a representative of the working class voicing his grief, complaint, protest and call to action; second, indirectly transforming his accusation and hatred into a caricature of our enemy, appearing as representative of the capitalist class. There is no room for elaborate private characters in the workers' theatre. The action of our plays must be based on types.

The workers' theatres of this country are not stationary. They have to move from place to place so as to come in contact with workers. It is very seldom that they find a relatively good stage where to put on their performances. Usually there is just a platform and sometimes not even that. Our playwrights must take this condition into account. They have to see to it that their plays are independent of the usual stage apparatus of the professional theatre, that they can be produced with a minimum of costumes, settings, decorations, lighting effects and other technical requirements.

(to be continued)

PREPARATION FOR THE LENIN MEMORIAL FESTIVAL

Lenin was the spirit of the Russian Revolution and this spirit still breathes when we speak of Lenin or hear his name. When giving a Lenin Memorial Festival we do not only confine ourselves to do honors to Lenin as the individual here, but we

celebrate the downfall of the exploiters and parasites, hailing the Workers' Republic.

In planning the program for the Lenin Memorial Festival, we should have in mind to keep this revolutionary spirit, and arrange the program accordingly.

The Workers' Theatre gives the following suggestions for the Lenin Memorial Festival.

Decoration of the hall:

All four walls of the hall should have red banners with the following slogans:

"The Workers have nothing to lose but their chains,
they have a world to gain" Marx

"Our teaching is no dogma but a guide to action" Lenin

"Workers of the World Unite"

"Defend the Soviet Union"

Above the banner facing the audience should be a red hammer and sickle. All bourgeois pictures and decorations are to be taken off or covered with a red cloth bearing slogans of the daily struggle of the working class, such as:

"Fight against War"

"Fight against discrimination"

"Fight for Unemployment Insurance"

The speaker's desk should also be covered with a red cloth.

If there is a stage in the hall where the Festival is held all bourgeois stage effects should be banished from it. The background of the stage should have a black curtain. The top frame of the stage should carry a red hammer and sickle. The two side frames of the stage should be decorated with red flags.

Recitations:

"Lenin Calls" (A mass recitation, published in this issue)

"Death of a Revolutionist"

"The Red Army"

"In Memory of a Leader"

"Statistics"

Songs:

"Internationale"

"Comintern"

"Hunger March"

"Stand Guard"

and other revolutionary songs that the comrades may know.

The above mentioned recitations may be had at the Dram-Buro,
18 West 21st.
N. Y. C.

PLAYS

LENIN CALLS

A Mass Recitation - translated from the German by B. Stern W.L.T.

- Listen to the call!
- You who dwell in the depths, listen!

All- You

- In workshops
- In mines
- Above and below the earth
- Are we nothing?

All- Nothing?

- We have built the world
- We have clothed the world
- We have housed the world
- Are we nothing?

All- No

- We are all
- The might of the masses lies in unity
- You who work
- Above and below the earth

All- Unite

- You who work
- Above and below the earth

All- Fight

- Unite and fight
- On the whole working front.

- Hear!
- See!
- Think!

All- Awake!

- Aircraft squadrons over the ocean!
- Battleships swarm the seven seas!
- Mobilize more men for the army
- Build more ships, canons, guns
- Is the cry in each country

All- Weapons for slaughtering workers

- In times of peace prepare for war

All- Prepare for war

- Yet there are Peace conferences
- What means peace?
- Is China greeted with peace?
- Wall Street sent Gun-Boats to Nicaragua and Java

All-Was that peace?

- Bulgaria hangs militant workers to the gallows

All-Is that peace?

- Workers are tortured by the Italian Fascists

All-Is that peace?

No!

Capitalist peace is WAR!

- War
- On the unemployed
- On the striking workers

All-War on the workers!

- Hear!

- See!

- Think!

- Awake!

- The bugles will blow
And drums will beat

- Blows and shots

Factory whistles

- With cries

Posters, banners, leaflets

- On both sides of the ocean

All-The world will re echo with Lenin's step

- Germany hears his step

All-Lenin

- And underground in the mines of Wales

All-Lenin

- Up and down the Yangtze he goes

All-Lenin

- Over rivers and seas

- Through mighty winds and primevil forests

- Far over the cloud topped Himalayas

All-Lenin

- Mighty ---irresistable

All-Lenin! Lenin! Lenin!

The above mass recitation can be performed by any number of comrades that are available in the group, the parts to be distributed accordingly.

More copies of the mass recitation are available at the Dram-Buro,
16 West 21st Str., N.Y.C.

"THE BIG STIFF"

by Tric.

Characters: A woman, 1st worker, 2nd worker, Dr. Hoover, Dr. Green, Undertaker and his assistants.

Scene: An ordinary room. A large bed in the center in which a man is lying completely covered by a sheet. A protuberance in the center indicates that the man's belly is swollen to twice its normal size. A large chest is at the right. At the left of the bed two men are seated in disconsolate attitudes. A woman is standing at the right of the bed and is looking at a thermometer in her hand as the curtain goes up.

Woman: Dropped 2½ points today.

1st Man: This hunger is driving me mad.

Woman: Sh-- not so loud . You'll wake him.

2nd Man: Well, it's time he wakes up. I don't care if he is sick. It's worse to be hungry.

Woman: Keep quiet. Keep quiet. Dr. Hoover will soon be here. He'll tell us what to do. I'm keeping you in mind. That's why I'm calling Dr. Hoover. He's not only a medical man, he's an expert on hunger. Look what he did for the hungry Belgians.

1st Man: There's a lot of food in that chest. Can't we have some of it while we wait?

Woman: Don't say that. Who's been filling your head with notions? Don't you know you mustn't touch what doesn't belong to you? You must wait until your Uncle Sam is well and tells you how much you can have.

2nd Man: And what about those tools? We made them ourselves didn't we? Can't we use them to dig up something in the garden?

Woman: You made them for Uncle Sam, and you mustn't use them without his permission. And even if you could take them, you can't go into the garden. That would be Trespass.

(She trembles with horror and even the men shudder a little)

But I hear a step. Soon it'll be all over. Uncle Sam will be well and you can work for him again as soon as he gives the word. Dr. Hoover is a man who knows his business.

(A knock is heard at the door)

Come in, Dr. Hoover, we're waiting for you.

Dr. Hoover: (entering briskly, rubbing his hands)
Well, well, what have we here? Ah, I see. No, don't tell me what's the matter. The man in bed is sick. My diagnosis is correct, isn't it?

Woman: What did I tell you? The doctor's a wonder, isn't he? So quick so business-like. He doesn't waste words. Yes doctor, you're right, he is sick. And so sick.

(The doctor busies himself carefully examining and measuring the bed with a foot rule while the woman talks)

He was beginning to have headaches about two years ago, but Dr. Coolidge said it was only momentary dizziness from too much health, and a little Christian Science would fix him fine. But I wasn't sure, and I had Dr. Ford in, and Dr. Ford said all he had to do was to eat more, and the increased consumption would help his circulation. That's why his belly is swollen. But he got worse and worse. I made these two young nephews of his work harder and they brought in more and more food, but he couldn't eat all of it and we filled up this chest, and he finally got unconscious and couldn't eat at all---

1st Man: I don't see why we can't eat some of it now.

Dr. Hoover: Here, here my lad. Don't interrupt your mother.
(Starts measuring the chest)

Woman: And Dr. Ford gave him up because, Dr. Ford said, what could a doctor do if the patient refuses to follow the prescription?

Dr. Hoover: Quite right, quite right. Let's see. (Looking at notes he made on the size of the bed and the chest)
10 by 14 and 9 by 6, and 13 by 48 and 6 by 7. I think I've got enough statistics. Just one more number. How long has the patient been unconscious?

Woman: Two years.

Dr. Hoover: H'm, h'm. That's 48 months and 730 days. Medicine is a science, you must know. Like engineering. Got to be exact. Nothing like figures to work out a problem. Two years. He hasn't employed his arms or his legs for two years?

Woman: Yes, he's been lying in his bed completely unemployed.

Dr. Hoover: Ah, unemployment. That's the disease. There's nothing like statistics for a good diagnosis. It's a chronic disease too.

Woman: Yes, he gets it about every ten years. His belly always gets swollen, but it's never been as swollen as this.

Dr.Hoover: A few more statistics will fix that part of it. I'll measure his belly to-morrow when I'll bring my belly-measuring instruments. Unemployment -- unemployment. You've got to be careful about that. It's a contagious disease. These young fellows look as if they've caught it. What are you loafing around here for?

2nd Man: We'd like to go out and work, but we can't take those tools out because they're Uncle Sam's, and we have to wait until he gives the word.

1st Man: We're hungry, we can't work now. Can't we get a little food out of that chest?

Dr.Hoover: No, no young man. That food will make you sick. You can't eat profits, you know. It's bad for workers. Wages is the food for you. I've got it. Wages! That's the diet for unemployment!

2nd Man: We'll take the food out of the chest. Come on. They can't stop us.

1st Man: We'd rather be sick than hungry. Then we'll take the tools too.

Dr.Hoover: Don't for heaven's sake. For heaven's sake. Wait only a few minutes. This case is getting too much for me. The unemployment disease is more advanced than I thought. I'll have to call in Dr.Green and Dr.Wood. They've specialized on the unemployment disease. Now I beg you wait just this once. Dr.Green is also a worker. For his sake if not for mine, wait. Have patience. (The men subside as Dr.Hoover rushes to the phone)
Applesauce 8888. Union headquarters? Send Dr.Green up to Uncle Sam's right away. Tell him Dr.Hoover wants him. He'll run right over as soon as he hears my name. Strongarm 0000. Police headquarters? Send Dr.Arthur Wood over right away to Uncle Sam's. Now just sit there and be quiet.
(He helps himself to some food in the chest)

Woman: (Showing Dr.Hoover the thermometer) Oh, doctor, another 5 point drop!

Dr.Hoover: (Puts another sheet over the man in the bed) We must cover. We must cover.

(A loud knock at the door)

Come in, come in. There they are, the unemployment experts. Let me introduce you. The man in the painter's overalls with the pail and brush is Dr.Green. Don't mind the overalls. He's a good doctor anyway. And this is Dr.Wood. He was a policeman once, and he knows how to operate without anesthetics. His little black bag contains wonderful surgical devices.

Dr.Green

and Dr.Wood: You called sir? Can we do anything?

Dr.Hoover: Everything, everything. It's your special field. A severe case of unemployment. Three cases.

1st Man: We don't have to be unemployed. Give us our tools and we'll show you.

Dr.Wood: Ah, the usual symptoms. Lack of property sense. I know how to drive that sense into patients' heads.
(Takes a club out of bag and plays with it)

Dr.Green: Oh you don't need to operate yet. I have a simpler remedy.
(He helps himself to some food from chest and gives some to all the others except the 1st and 2nd man)

Dr.Hoover: And what is that?

Dr.Green: Just promise them that you won't reduce their wages.

Men: But we haven't got any wages. We're out of work.

Dr.Green: Oh, that's allright boys. When you get wages, they won't be reduced.
(The two men take time to figure that out)
There's one thing I always do for every unemployment case. I find it's very soothing to have a nice fine bed. (Dips his brush into pail and spreads whitewash over the bed) There now, you'd hardly know there was a patient.

Dr.Hoover: Fine, fine, we're making progress. Now the thing to do is to get Uncle Sam walking again so the boys can have their tools. Am I right?

Dr.Green
and Wood: Yes Sir.

Woman: Ah, we have reached the bottom. The cure is beginning. We must wait. But these young fellows are becoming restless. How can we keep them quiet.

Dr.Green: We must send for the Reverend Dr.Norman Thomas.

Dr.Hoover: What good is a minister?

Dr.Green: He'll talk the boys to sleep.
(A loud knock is heard at the door. Funeral march is heard in the distance, swelling during the following)

Woman: Who's that?
(The knock gets louder)

All: Who's that?
(The knock is still louder)

Woman: Tell us your name or go away. A sick man is lying here.

Voice: A DEAD MAN IS LYING HERE!

(The door is forced open and a man dressed in black with a red cap and red arm band followed by 4 other men similarly dressed enters. The four line up with the workers.)

Dr.Hoover: Who are you?

Newcomer: A Communist, the undertaker of capitalism. I smelt the corpse from outside. It is my duty to bury it.

Dr.Green: We are doctors, and we know a corpse when we see it. Go away. We don't need you yet.

Newcomer: We will go away, but we take the corpse with us. Too long has it been poisoning the air of this house.

Dr.Wood: You can't have it!
(He advances with his club but he is hampered by his sandwich and is knocked down by one of the undertaker's assistants and pushed out by the cuff of his neck. There is a general free for all fight. The 1st and 2nd Man join in the fight. The doctors are overpowered and put out. The woman shrinks away into a corner. The undertakers carry away the corpse)

Woman: (Weeping) Poor Uncle Sam. Poor Uncle Sam. He was the only one in the world who knew how to keep the workers down.
(She follows the corpse out)

Newcomer: The chest is yours!

1st and 2nd Man: Hurray! Now we can eat! Now we can work!

Properties for the Big Stiff:

Stretcher bed with U.S. insignia - red, white and blue shield and eagle.
Figure in bed with lump in middle. Chest marked CAPITAL. 4 Stools. Telephone and stand, sandwiches in chest.

Woman: Helmet-like nurse's cap suggesting goddess of liberty, white dress, thermometer.

Dr.Hoover: Tail coat, ruler, pencil and note book.

Dr.Green: Painter's overalls, pail and brush, A.F. of L. band across chest.

Dr.Wood: police officer's uniform, bag containing club.

WORKERS CHILDREN'S THEATRE

OUTLINE ON WORKERS CHILDREN'S THEATRE PLAYS

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

All children's plays published in former issues of "WORKERS THEATRE" have the same editors' note: "some good points as far as language and action is concerned, but weak from the point of view of propaganda value."

Why did we feel that way after reading them? What do we expect a workers children's play to be and to accomplish?

We expect a play to be entertainment and a means of propaganda used by the children for their special demands and aims. All plays produced by class conscious workers children's groups must have a political content, must be based on working class issues, issues which are taken from workers children's daily life and struggle. More than we did up to now, we must use every day events and happenings for plays, not only special situations, like strike, special campaigns, etc

Plays should not be written or produced as recreation or for merely entertainment. Pioneer leaders should realize that we have to get the children away from the bourgeois idea of mere entertainment. (Art for art's sake) We have to get the children used to the idea of unity of life and class-struggle - even in their plays.

The plays published up to now have this political content and the propaganda idea. But that is not enough.

The political content must be made thoroughly clear, must be brought out strong and convincingly. Thus every child in the audience must be able to understand facts, discussions, and conclusions and - be convinced by them. Only then will the play fulfill its task as a medium of propaganda: to make indifferent children understand the aims and importance of workers children's organizations, and to win over children from the bourgeois organizations. All this will be done in a form of entertainment, much easier than thru many speeches.

And this was the weak point in our plays. They are not convincing, therefore do not accomplish their task fully.

The authors of the plays chose the method of least resistance on the side of the opponents: They make it too easy for the pioneers, for

instance, to scare and drive out the teacher, to win over the boy-scout to the pioneers, etc. By this the pioneers have no chance to bring out their program, to contradict their opponents, to clear up every child's mind about what they intend to say.

We must get away from these easy ways. We must make our opponents even stronger than they are in reality, and then overcome them. Then we will be sure that our play is agitating and convincing.

(To be continued.)

FROM A REVIEW OF A CONTEST OF 8 CHILDREN'S
AGITPROP TROOPS IN BERLIN

Translated from
"ARBEITER-BUEHNE UND -FILM"

NOTE: We bring this interesting and healthy criticism of the work and plays of the Berlin groups, because we think, it can be of help to our groups in similar situations.

.....When we saw the performances, we felt that there was too much drill and training. No consideration for the child's want for play and for the fighting spirit, natural to every child! The lack of appropriate children's language is one of the major shortcomings. Matters pertaining and of interest to children were hardly dealt with. If they performed a strike scene, the children played adult strikers and yellow-union-bureaucrats, instead of showing how the strike affects the workers children. Are there no examples where children helped their fathers in time of a strike? Or cases where they demanded that their parents helped them out in their school-strikes? Did we not experience recently the strike of 1000 apprentices? Are there no discussions taking place between newspaperboys, messengerboys, and their employers?

School problems are practically absent on the program of the 8 troops. Nothing is being said about the special children's demands, about schools and education in Soviet-Russia, while the Young Pioneers furnish the best play material one can hope to find.

All functionaries in children's work should bear in mind that the best troops were those that came from a political Children's Circle or from a Workers Children's Club, and Pioneers from the "Culmschule" who had practical experience from their school nucleus. These troops were for the most part lively, fresh, disciplined, and awake. It was obvi-

ous that these boys and girls understood what they were dramatizing. In their presence one felt how their proletarian vitality directed itself not only against the chains of bourgeois education, but even against the adherence to a text made up of unnatural, and fixed up rhymes. They want to speak in their own way. Correct!

At least these troops played for the most part from the life of workers children. (Reformatory scene, distribution of leaflets in school, the squeeler in the class, etc.) That's where we must start! The workers children must first of all understand their interests, their tasks, and their demands as children, then they will be able to present them in their troops. For: Children's troops separated from the schoolstruggle, separated from the revolutionary education of the proletarian children, separated from the whole great and important mass activities between the workers children - are not workers children's troops.

THERE IS NO NEWS

of Workers Children's Theatre Groups, nor a play for children published in this issue, because none of the groups active in dramatic work responded to our request for such material.

ALL GROUPS AND GROUP LEADERS are urged, again, to send reports of their work, news, and material for production to "WORKERS THEATRE", 16 West 21st St, NYC

WORKERS CHILDREN'S PLAYS

available at "WORKERS THEATRE"

"BREADLINE", written by Spanish Workers International Relief Scouts.

"A BEGINNING OF A CHILDREN'S THEATRE GROUP MEETING IN THE STRIKE AREA"
A dialogue, as it really happened in the Miners' strike
Can easily be changed into a good strong propaganda play

"MILK FOR MINERS' CHILDREN", a play about the Miners' Strike

"FREE FOOD FOR WORKERS CHILDREN", by the Communist Theatre, Paterson.

"THE HISTORY LESSON", a play about Pioneer work in the school.

REVIEWS

MOURNING BECOMES EUGENE O'NEILL

by A. Prentiss.

The priests of primitive Greece, in their endeavor to establish themselves as a caste, to be respected and feared, dramatized the moral that crime begets crime to show that one must fear the gods who may take it into their heads one fine day to make mortal man commit a crime and who may punish him for that crime unto the third and fourth generation. Every year at a great festival they told in long and elaborate plays, presented before the temple of Dionysius, how King Agamemnon, returning from the Trojan war was killed by his wife Clytemnestra. To punish her the gods have her killed by her son Orestes who must also expiate this murder and must also be killed. The whole populace learned that one must not commit any crimes, one must not offend the gods, one must not offend the servants of the gods -- the priests. Thus in primitive days, the play had a social basis.

In the early part of the twentieth century a morbid and sickly young man, buffeted by various trade winds, is cast ashore at Provincetown, Massachusetts. There he begins to tell, in dramatic playlets, that life is bitter, that it is full of despair. He tells of Yank who wants life yet "does not belong"; he tells of Olsen who is robbed and shanghaied; he tells of men who try to grasp at a wisp of happiness, of hope, but fate is against them. --- He - Eugene O'Neill - does not hold out any hope to mankind, does not show the way out, but his audiences seem to see in his plays real people, a breath of real life. He is acclaimed as "the great American playwright", and is awarded a Pulitzer prize. He begins to take himself seriously.

What must one do to maintain the position of a great playwright? One must write in verse, one must follow in the Greek tradition (whatever that means), one must write about unusual things in an unusual manner. - And if these unusual writings have a good advertising value, who cares? - Besides they help keep one in a French chateau, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life where conditions are too bitter to give a great playwright the proper perspective.

And thus we get a stream of plays all unrelated to life. We get "The Fountain", in verse, dealing with Ponce de Leon; we get "Beyond the Horizon", dealing with an artist's soul; we get "The Great God Brown", dealing with the many forms of Dionysius; we get "The Strange Interlude", dealing with psychoanalysis and love or what have you; we get "Dynamo", where man is shown worshipping the machine, instead of man controlling the machine.

But one cannot expect to go down in history, say, alongside of Aeschylus, unless one has written a great tragedy. (To avoid misunderstanding, dear Worker, a tragedy in playwrighting lingo is not starvation or sickness or death, a tragedy means a play where the characters talk oratorically about murder and retribution and the gods and fate). What better than to tie up the above Orestes legend with something fashionable, say, the new psychology, and mother and father "fixation"? Put them all together and we get "Lourning becomes Electra". (Electra in the Greek play was Orestes' sister who helped him kill off everybody.)

The scene is laid in this country in 1860, (perhaps to make the colonial style of architecture remind you of the Greek Temple) at the moment of the return of General Mannon from war. His wife Christine, originally in love with him, had transferred her affection to her son Orrin who loves her too, and after he had gone to war, to young Captain Brant, a cousin who resembles the general. Her daughter Lavinia in love with her father and with Captain Brant, is jealous of her mother and warns her father of Brant. Christine poisons her husband but is discovered by Lavinia who tells all to Orrin. Orrin kills Brant, and Christine kills herself. Orrin transfers his mother fixation to his sister, but she is dreaming of Captain Brant. Orrin kills himself and the play ends with Lavinia talking about retribution.

And how does O'Neill carry out this play (are such plays necessary?) about murder? In three long plays and fourteen scenes, no less, his characters tell you in oracular tones, in many discussions, asides and monologues that murder will be punished. But the characters do not live, they don't touch you, they don't convince you. They pass before you like a talkie -- and talk and tell of Doom, of the Mannon blood; of criminal tendencies being inherited.

It seems that this last is O'Neill's thesis, but that's where he is wrong. Criminal tendencies are not inherited, criminal tendencies are products of the environment. Crime is not being transferred from parents to children in their blood, crime is forced upon man in the struggle for existence. Man does not have to be in the hands of Fate. Man, Collective Man, is learning to control Fate by changing the environment. And the Yanks and Olsens in Chile and Britain and over the seven seas are banding together to control that Fate, to change the environment, to do away with crime.

But Eugene O'Neill has forgotten his shipmates who have made him famous. While they are being starved and shanghaied and beaten up and deported, he runs away from life and hides in his ivory tower. There he can write dispassionately for his paying public, there he can write of things to thrill them. Of Despair, Fate, Murder and Doom. "Lourning becomes Eugene O'Neill."

ATTENTION -- The great Soviet-Film "IGDENBU" will be shown Friday, Dec. 18, at the Labor Temple, 14th Street and 2nd Ave, New York City.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Reviewed by Gertrud Schacht.

Alexis Granowsky, former director of the Moscow Yiddish Theatre, presents his latest production "The Song of Life". We can see and appreciate the new idea he is giving us regarding the structure of a film, only he should have done a more thorough job, and he should have also changed the subject. Granowsky's subject is sentimental, romantic and far away from real life. His only demand is: Let's live this life and enjoy it! Why, what for and how, he does not say, and he cannot say because this would lead him into the discussion of social problems which is not the task of bourgeois art. Bourgeois art only wants to entertain, and to draw away the attention of the audience from to-day's economic and political questions. This again shows the decay of bourgeois art. New and fine ideas have to be put in an old, limited and outworn shape. They must be killed partly in order to find the approval of a degenerated capitalist society.

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WORKERS THEATRE GROUPS OF NEW YORK

must send their delegate to every meeting
 of the

DRAM COUNCIL

Regular meetings every second Monday, at 35 East 12th Street, N.Y.C., at 8.30 P.M.
 Next meetings on Dec. 14th, Dec. 28th, and Jan. 11.

Send members of your groups to participate in the mass pageant for the Daily Worker.
 First rehearsal on Friday, December 18th, at 8.30, at 35 East 12th Street, N.Y.C.

THE GROUPS IN ACTION

REPORT OF THE "ELORE DRAMATIC CLUB'S SHOCK BRIGADES".

By Ruth Weinberg.

Altho the Elore Dramatic Club was formed in order to propagate Workers Culture, it did not fulfill it's task until a shock Brigade was formed. It seemed to us, that a brigade of this kind is only possible after the capturing of power by the Proletariat, as in the Soviet-Union. But as the economic crisis is deepening, we were forced to think and act differently. It was our press the "Uj Elore" which gave us the impetus.

The Hungarian Press as all working class press finds itself in a critical financial situation. Widespread entertainments were arranged for the benefit of the "Uj Elore".

The programs of these entertainments, which were held in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Conn. and Maryland, were presented by the "Shock Brigades".

The Shock Brigade consisted of four women and six men. These ten class-conscious worker-amateurs contributed all their energy ability to put the program on as high workers cultural level, as possible. It was this group of ten, that filled all functions necessary for such tour. The driver, (we traveled by second hand cars in order to avoid expenses) the mechanic, chairman, speaker, actors, musicians, chorus, solo, all were members of this group of ten.

The program consisted of two "Living News" sketches which dealt with the election; revolutionary poems, songs, music, monologue, and also a one act play called "The Press" which exposes the capitalist press and calls upon the workers to support the workers press. In spite of the fact that we had very little technical equipment, in many cases none at all, because in a few towns these were the first cultural gatherings of this kind, we faced all hardship and made our program as artistic as possible.

We had visited the following places: New Brunswick, Trenton, Bethlehem, Easton, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Passaic, Baltimore, Rahway, and Perth Amboy. These places were covered in six weeks during Saturdays and Sundays.

The significant features of this tour were, first the reception of the workers in various towns. Every number of the program was a spring breeze which awakend them from the dreary winter sleep. In

some places the workers asked from us for revolutionary songs, and some of the workers remarked "next time when you'll come back, we will sing with you."

Altogether we had reached a thousand workers in this tour. The enthusiasm of these workers was also expressed in their contribution to the Hungarian Communist press. In spite of the great unemployment, the workers gave all their pennies to support their paper. Another workers remarked "Our paper is supported by the workers, made by the workers, for the workers". We also gained subscriptions for the "Uj Elore".

We can clearly see from the above report, that we have to intensify this type of "Shock Brigade" work. Capitalism was never interested to raise the cultural level of the working class. It is our great task to go among the backward workers to teach and enlighten them. There is a great possibility to win the masses thru all forms of propaganda, for the cause of the working class. Step on it! Workers Clubs, dramatic and others, let us reach the goal of the Workers Cultural Federation.

Dear Comrades;

We regret very much not having acknowledged your letter any sooner. With most of our after-work hours spent on various org. activities it is a small wonder that we find any time at our disposal to answer letters.

We are glad to inform you that the 20 copies of "WORKERS THEATRE" were disposed of with very little effort. At the last meeting of the John Reed Club, the writer utilized the occasion and said a few words about the periodical and its significance in the development of the proletarian theatre. The response was very gratifying: 20 copies disappeared in a jiffy. Too bad we did not have more on hand.

Enclosed find check for \$ 4.25 to be applied as follows:

5 copies of Oct. issue	\$-.75
Subscription for 1 year	1.50
20 copies of Nov. issue	2.--
	<u>\$4.25</u>

Please forward December issue as soon as you possibly can. Will discuss "PRINTED WORKERS THEATRE" at our next business meeting, but we should like you to write more about it.

Philadelphia.

Comradely yours
 "John Reed Dram Group
 R. Reznikow
 Sec'y

This letter speaks for itself, it needs no comment. We hope to receive more of this kind for publication in the Jan. issue.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE FIRST NATIONAL WORKERS THEATRE CONFERENCE IN U.S.A. has been scheduled for April 1932. The Dram-Buro has sent out to all groups questionnaires to find out if the groups agree with the set date and how far they are ready to participate in the conference. As soon as this matter has been discussed in the organizations the answers and recommendations must be rushed to the Dram Buro 16 West 21st Str. New York City, so that the organizational preparations can be started immediately. - The Draft program, as presented by the Dram Buro provides for a Workers Theatre Festival on the largest scale, featuring performances of groups of all parts of the country and of all languages in a socialist competition (Theatre Spartakiade). The business meetings will include reports and discussions on the main problems of the Workers Theatre Movement in U.S.A. The organizational task of the conference is the formation of a National Workers Theatre Organization coordinating and centralizing the activities of all groups in this country.

THE WORKERS DRAMATIC COUNCIL OF NY decided to meet every second Monday. The next sessions will be on Dec. 14, Dec. 28, and Jan. 11, at 8.30 at the Workers Center, 35 East 12th Str. N.Y. - In Nov. two sessions were held. On Nov. 16th Com. Reines from the Dram Buro gave a detailed report on the International Workers Theatre Conference in Moscow (based on the original minutes). In the discussion that followed it was moved and voted on

that the Dram Buro draft a plan on how to carry out the recommendations made by the International Conference. - The plan of the Dram Buro for the First National Theatre Conference in U.S.A. was presented by Com. Ober and accepted by the delegates for discussion in the groups. - The Council meeting on Nov. 30th was the most interesting and most successful. Besides the organizations which are regularly represented, as Workers Lab. Theatre, Proletcult, Jewish Central Committee, Prolet-Buehne, Hungarian Federation, Jack London Club, Newark, some organizations, Ukrainian Dram Circle, Yugoslavian Workers Club, Williamsburgh Workers Club, Naturefriends, had sent their delegates for the first time. Following the reports by the delegates on the activities, achievements and problems of their groups a lively and valuable discussion took place. All delegates agreed that the old idea of the Workers Theatre for a and entertainment's sake must be abandoned and be replaced by more efficient organizational and artistic methods. The groups experienced that there is no more room in Workers Theatres for complicated stage settings, costumes, make-up and other relies from the professional stage. The problem came up to provide the competent forces to transform the groups from the old style to the new. The various departments of the Dram Buro offered their assistance by providing play and giving organizational and artistic advice. When the delegate from the City Central Committee of the Jewish Workers Clubs announced that his organization had arranged a course of lectures in stage painting, make-up, lighting effects and technique of acting, to be given by prominent members of the Artef, a storm of excitement and protest

arose among the delegates. A motion was passed unanimously that the Dram Council should organize a Workers Theatre School and that the plan for this school be worked out by the Dram Buro.

A COLLECTION OF WORKERS THEATRE PLAYS IN ALL LANGUAGES is being built up by the Repertory Department of the Dram Buro. All Workers Theatres of the country are asked to send in one copy of each play at their disposal. The suitable plays will be translated so that they are available in English as well as in foreign languages. Everything will be done in order to have at hand as soon as possible the necessary material to give all groups real aid in building up an effective proletarian repertory. It is in the interest of each group to cooperate with the repertory department of the Dram Buro by sending in the material immediately. The address is: 16 W 21 St, NYC

WORKERS LABORATORY THEATRE gave 3 performances in November, including the first performance of the new play "Mr. Box, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Nox". Bookings for December are so far: 12.12. "Mr. Box, Mr. Nox and Mr. Fox" (Workers Sport Club Fichte, 347 E 72) 12.18. Same play (Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union) 12.20. Same play (W.I.R. Reception of delegation) - A series of Workers Theatre Nights is being arranged by the WLT for every Saturday night, beginning Dec. 18th. Each program will include a speaker (in English), a performance by a workers theatre group, and discussion. Among the groups that are already scheduled for December are the WLT, the Scandinavian Blue Blouses, and the German Prolet-Buehne. These Workers Theatre Nights will help to clarify the problems facing the workers theatre

movement here, and will also afford an opportunity to see various groups in action. The Nights will be held at W.I.R. auditorium, 16 W 21, NYC

PROLET-BUEHNE, GERMAN AGITPROP TRUCC N.Y. presented two new productions in November: "The Workers have a Fatherland", a group recitation on the 14th anniversary of the Russian Revolution; and "I.L.D., More Than Ever!" an agitprop play for the I.L.D. The group gave in all 16 performances during Nov. The following 7 performances are scheduled for Dec: 12.5. Full evening program of 6 plays (I.W.O. Br. 50, 5 Belmont Av Newark) 12.12. "Work or Wages", "I.L.D., More Than Ever!" (Naturefriends, Kensington Labor Lyceum, Philadelphia) 12.19. One act plays (Women's Council 23, 350 E 81) 12.19. One act plays (Printing Workers Industrial League) 12.20. Agitprop play and lecture (Discussion night of Prolet-Buehne, 243 E 84) 12.26. "I.L.D., More Than Ever!" "Belt" (Workers Theatre Night, 16 W 21) 12.26. New Years Eve Farce (German Workers Club, 243 E 84) - The comrade players are invited to visit our rehearsals which take place every Wednesday at the Hungarian Workers Home, 350 E 81st Str. -

JACK LONDON CLUB, NEWARK has a very active and well functioning Dram Section. The group is rehearsing "Mr. Gos is not in" for the first performance on Dec. 6. in Newark. The next play to be rehearsed will be "Step on it".

SCANDINAVIAN BLUE BLOUSES, N.Y. gave in November two performances of the group recitation "The Party". The group will produce also English recitations and plays.

PROLET CULT, N.Y. - The formation of a second theatre group makes it possible to increase the number of par-

performances outside of the club. The next production will be "Step on it!"

DRAM SECTIONS OF THE JEWISH WORKERS CLUBS have the following performances in November:

Prospect Workers Club "Vaudeville Night" on Dec. 15. at 1157 Southern Blvd.

Bronx Workers Club "Fritz and Fedor", a 3 act play, on Dec. 15. 1610 Boston Rd.

"Fritz and Fedor", on Dec. 30, Union Ave. Downtown Workers Club

"Business is Improving", on Dec. 19, at 11 Clinton Str. NYC

East Side Workers Club "Business is Improving", on Dec. 19, at 196 Broadway, NYC

Brooklyn Youth Club, "Business, Money and Profit", a press play, on Dec. 15, at 105 Tatford Ave, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Coney Island Workers Club, "Fritz and Fedor", on Dec. 27, at 2129 W 32 str. Brooklyn

Williamsburg Workers Club Miners Anti-Religious Play, on Dec. 30, at 795 Flushing Ave, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Bath Beach Workers Club, "Instinct", a play on the Russian Revolution, on Dec. 30, at 48 Bay 28. Str. Brooklyn, N.Y.

THE YUGOSLAVIA WORKERS CLUB, N.Y. is giving Workers Theatre performances with an average of 40 players participating. A separate Dram Section does not exist yet. Up to now the performances were done in the old theatre style, using painted scenery, costumes, and make-up. The organization decided to change to the new agitprop style which produces a maximum of effect with a minimum of technical means. The formation of a new group of 6-8 members is planned.

THE NATURE FRIENDS, N.Y. a German Workers Theatre organization with a membership of 600. organized an Agitprop group of 16 players. The principle task of the group is to spread the idea of workers sport and culture. The first production will be a group recitation, written by the members themselves. The group meets every Friday in the Workers Center, 35 East 12th Str. N.Y.C.

THE N.Y. is playing "Trickenish" (an adaptation of H. Flanagan's "Can You Hear Their

Voices?") every Sunday as Matinee and evening performance. The first performance of "Hirsh Leckert", a historical drama by Kushnirov, is scheduled for the third week of January.

THE WORKERS EX-SERVICEMEN'S LEAGUE will produce "Bonus Thieves on Trial" at the affair on Dec. 11, at Manh. Lyceum, 66 1/2 Str., N.Y.E. The play is written by a member of the Workers Lab. Theatre, and directed by Ida Rauh of the New School for Social Research, while the acting will be done by the members of the Workers Ex-servicemen's League.

A REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS' CONFERENCE will be held on Sunday, Jan. 10th, 10.30 A.M. at the Workers Cultural Center, 33 West 15th-Str., N.Y.C. Purpose of the Conference is to form a Revolutionary Writers Federation co-ordinating the activities of all proletarian writers and workers correspondents in New York Area and to lay a basis for a federation on a national scale. Communications should be sent to the Writers Federation Committee, 63 W 15th Str. N.Y.C.

A WORKERS LIBRARY is being built by the Cultural Dept. of the W.I.R. The organizations are asked to contribute books, magazines, and pamphlets. Address: Library Committee of W.I.R., 13 W 21st Str. N.Y.C.

THE JOHN REED CLUB, DETROIT has been organized recently and is building up a Dram Section. Material for production is wanted.

THE COMMUNIST, monthly theoretical organ of the C.P.U.S.A. will reduce its price from January on, due to a rapid growth in the circulation. Single copies will be 20¢ instead of 25¢, and a yearly subscription will be \$2.- instead of \$2.50. Orders for the Dec. issue may still be sent (for a limited time) to Workers Library Publishers, P.O. Box 148, Sta. D. Watch for reduced price for combination subscription of "Communist" and "Workers Theatre".

SEND IN NEWS FROM YOUR GROUPS REGULARLY!

IN THE RED SPOTLIGHT

By H. Gardner

THE JEWISH DRAM SECTIONS SPEND 400 DOLLARS for an instruction course in acting, directing, stage painting, costume designing and - (don't faint) make-up. The money goes partly to the Jewish Workers University for rent, and to the instructors from the Artef as tuition fees.

The Jewish comrades had undoubtedly the good intention and the right idea to strengthen the propaganda power of the workers theatre by developing its technical means. In reality they are going to weaken the workers theatre by developing all the junk that we must throw away in order to become a strong weapon in the class struggle. The Jewish Dram Sections are making a bad mistake. The Artef - however - should know better.

But that is not only a matter between the Jewish Dram Sections and the Artef. Weakening a number of Dram groups means doing harm to the whole workers theatre movement of this country and to the entire revolutionary movement. What are the Cultural Federation, the Dram Bureau, and the NY Dram Council doing to prevent this damage in the last minute?

MOURNING STOPS EVEN EUGENE O'NEILL

tempo- rarely when speaking on the Theatre in the Soviet Union. Besides some rather confusing and contradicting statements on his own writings, on the theatre in general and on the New York Theatre in particular, he says: (N.Y. Times Magazine, Oct. 4, 1931) 'In Russia there is a real renaissance of the theatre. It is a new country with new ideas, and tradition does not bind it, nor does commercialism throttle it. New men get a chance and new ideas are tried out,

and the box office does not play the leading part. The result is that to my mind the most interesting work that is being done to-day in the theatre is in Russia. O'Neill saw the best theatre of the world. he recognized the conditions under which only a renaissance of art is possible, he comes home, and does the only sensible and logical thing a bourgeois playwright can do - he writes "Mourning Becomes Electra" for the bourgeois theatre.

The bourgeois writers are at the end of their wisdom. They have nothing to say anymore. And they write yearly scores of plays for the bourgeois theatre. The revolutionary writers of this country have a lot to say. And they write for the Workers Theatre - nothing!

THE ARTEF

In the advertisement in the Daily Worker (Dec. 4) presents itself as the "Only Jewish Workers Theatre in America". Some comrade might say that the Artef really does not know about the existence of at least 14 Jewish revolutionary Workers Theatres (besides the Artef) in New York City. As the Artef did not know up to now about the Dram Council and did not - for this reason - send a delegate to the Dram Council where the other Jewish Workers Theatres are represented. But don't make the mistake to complain at the membership, who would send you to the MANAGEMENT anyway. Which does not mean that you should go to the management, which would send you to the publicity manager, who - of course - is too busy to be reached some where.

FOR THE COMRADE READERS

who complain that there is too much theoretical writing in this Magazine the new section "The Group in Action" has been created, so that they have the swell opportunity to give their share to improve the Magazine by contributing interesting reports on the activities of their groups. We all like to read how the various groups are producing their plays, which method they use for a better contact between theatre group and audience, etc.