

Medicine for the People

A Living Newspaper, with a message for the AMA . . . Pauline Lord in a "better-than-average" thriller . . . A new technique in folk songs.

ORIGINALLY scheduled for Federal Theater production, Oscar Saul's and H. R. Hays' *Medicine Show*, a Living Newspaper, has finally reached production at the New Yorker Theater. It is an interesting attempt to dramatize, in the form made so popular by *Triple-A Plowed Under*, *Power*, *One-Third of a Nation*, and other FTP plays, the problem of public health in the United States. The American Medical Association, which is under indictment for conspiracy in restraint of trade in the matter of a Washington group health plan, will not like the show at all. For *Medicine Show* capably attacks the bureaucratic and reactionary policies of that policy-making body of American organized medicine.

In the documentary form, it speaks of the 250,000 preventable deaths that occur annually in this country, and it points the way to a remedy for so catastrophic an incidence of curable disease. It lays the blame largely at the door of the AMA, whose insistence on the "sanctity" of the doctor-patient relationship has been made into a fetish effectively barring any progressive measures that might be undertaken in the interests of public health. It makes it clear that disease follows definite class lines, that "the poorer you are the sicker you are," and the less treatment you are likely to receive. As a signpost to reform, the play deserves a wide audience, for its appeal is direct and it hits us where we live.

But the fact remains that *Medicine Show*, while dealing in a capable and didactic manner with the statistics of nationwide medical practice, has several handicaps both in writing and direction. It moves and halts. The play expounds, in many places effectively, but does not fully attain the indignation which it should. The facts and figures of the plight of the majority of our people whose access to medical care is severely limited by their purses are not too well externalized in theatrical terms.

THE ACTORS

The performance of Martin Gabel as a statistical commentator has impact and sincerity. Alfred Ryder's Dr. Young is appealing in the conviction the actor brings to the role of a young doctor, impotent to fulfill the Hippocratic oath because he is strapped and bound by the rigidity of medical "ethics," which can deprive him of his license and his reputation for stepping "out of bounds." William Hansen, whose old man with a dog was memorable in the recent *Night Music*, gives us an excellent country doctor in a bit part. As a quack, Norman Lloyd reveals a fine sense of farce-fantasy. Hanns Eisler's incident

tal music is integral to the play. *Medicine Show* is an honest and useful piece of work.

ANTI-WAR PLAY

Now is the time for bigger and better anti-war plays. They should be opening on every hand; they should be written by our most accomplished playwrights and performed by our most distinguished actors, and they should be available to the widest possible audience. Therefore the little anti-war play at the Cherry Lane Theater in Greenwich Village is a sadder affair than it should be. *Death Sounds the Trumpet* is the title, the author is Louis Sack, and the producer the Actors Ensemble Theater.

Inept in its writing and performance, *Death Sounds the Trumpet* is unlikely to have wide influence. We shall have to wait for Mr. Sack to show more evidence of dramaturgic talent, and the cast more signs of histrionic ability. This, of course, does not invalidate the honesty of the playwright's and performers' intentions.

SUSPECT

Edward Percy and Reginald Denham, the British authors of *Ladies in Retirement*, which you will eventually have to see, are here again with another psychological murder play, *Suspect*, which brings Pauline Lord to the Playhouse. This time they are not so happy in their choice of material or their handling of it, although the story of Mrs. Smith, suspected of having committed a particularly horrible pair of murders some twenty years before, is certainly a better-than-average effort in its class.

Again the drama springs directly from the character of the former Scots girl who did or did not kill her father and step-mother in a fit of adolescent frustration; and the suspense from the efforts of people who think they recognize her to make her resolve a tense situation by confessing. Much of the motivation and writing of this one is of a routine order. Arthur Beckhard's direction is wooden, and the authors could not resist ringing in a spot of Allied war propaganda in the bargain. But let that go for the nonce; it is barely relative to the play. The whole adds up to a fair evening of entertainment in the theater, entertainment that relies mostly on the performances of Pauline Lord as the suspect and Grayce Hampton as her nominal housekeeper.

Miss Lord, whose performance in O'Neill's *Anna Christie* has not been forgotten by a generation of playgoers, has dropped some of her more stylized mannerisms with the years. She plays with valid emotional power and dramatic instinct. Miss Hampton is a dour

Scotswoman whose stage relationship to the unhappy Mrs. Smith is gratifying in its intelligent understanding of human motives. You will want to watch them both at work.

ALVAH BESSIE.

"The Cradle"

Timely revival of Blitzstein's show at the New School.

THE blistering satire and musical charm of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* received a fairly professional expression at the New School for Social Research last week when the Flatbush Art Theater's players revived it for the last time this season. It has not lost anything since the Federal Theater refused to sponsor it and it was first presented on a bare stage with the (recently Guggenheimed) composer at the piano.

Credit is due to this vigorous young group from Brooklyn, its leading lady, Betty Garrett, Bob Sharron, Lou Cooper, the musical director, and to the American Ballad Singers who performed in it. We look forward to their next season.

H. C. A.

Polish Folk Songs

Refreshing new technique of Marion Corda at Town Hall.

FOR concertgoers who wish to obtain relief from the usual stuffy and formal recitals, Miss Marion Corda is recommended. Billed at her recent Town Hall recital as a "Polish singing actress," Miss Corda in a diversified program of folk songs from different countries overcame conventional concert "niceties" by a generous use of props, body movements, and vocal manipulations. This intimate presentation abetted by style, language, diction, acting ability compensated for a voice of small proportions and achieved on the whole some very entertaining results.

The choice of material, however, was not quite so fortunate. While all folk music has an innate charm, no matter what the subject, its range is much broader than the boy-girl theme Miss Corda chose to accent. Every country has a wealth of people's music that deals with their daily work, struggles, and aspirations. From these has come some of the most poignant and touching folk music. It is to be hoped that Miss Corda will include the latter in her future recitals for not only will her repertoire have a better balance but she will acquire a new and broader audience.

LOU COOPER.

No, not this way there is another

"IT LOOKS as if the United States is going to get into this war," said twenty-three year old Lindsay Crocker to his mother. "I don't like war, and I don't want to go to war," said Lindsay Crocker. And he took his own life rather than have it taken by others . . .

He was not the chairman of the Dome Mining Company, Ltd. He did not belong to the Lotus Club, the Sands Point (L. I.) Golf Club, the Century and Country. Unlike Jules S. Bache, whose story *New Masses* brought you on last week's back cover, Lindsay Crocker was not a director of fifteen leading corporations. Unlike Jules S. Bache, he owned no art gallery at 814 Fifth Ave., no garage at 163 East 70th. He did not think that supporting the Allies was "good business." Unlike Mr. Bache, Lindsay Crocker had neutrality in his head, but his heart was heavy with the instinctive realization that the men who rule America were tormenting him, overwhelming him, driving him, plunging him into this war. Lindsay Crocker is America's first

casualty. Bury the dead, say the morning papers, but Lindsay Crocker refuses to be buried. He knew what he wanted, but he didn't know the way to get it. He didn't know how. Millions of Americans share his foreboding, millions grope for a way to stay out of this war, millions are learning how. Millions of Americans want to be heard, want to say what's on their minds, want to hear friendly voices, want to share solidarity in the struggle against this war.

New Masses Offers You a Forum

a place to have your say, to let America be heard. Beginning with our very next issue, *New Masses* wants to print your letters, your argument, your discussion about this war, and how to stay out of it. *New Masses* will send the current issue of the magazine to every public figure in the progressive and labor movement, to every peace organization, to every friend of American democracy. We want their opinions, their plans of action. And you—you and your friends to whom you must bring this message—must write your own plans, your own program of action.

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVE, N. Y. C.
 Please enter my subscription to *New Masses* for the period indicated by the checkmark:
 six months, \$2.50; one year, \$4.50;
 two years, \$7.50; three years, \$10.

Name

Address

City and State

Amount Enclosed \$

4-23-40

Man Kills Self, Fearing U. S. Is 'Going to War'

Notes News Briefly With
Mother; Parents Find Him
Dead Few Hours Later

When he returned home yesterday morning after working the night shift in the printing shop in which he was employed, Lindsay Crocker, twenty-three years old, of 445 West Twenty-first Street, handed the morning newspapers to his mother and said glumly: "It looks as if the United States is going to get into the war. I don't like war, and I don't want to go to war."

Later Mr. and Mrs. Crocker left for Kingston, N. Y., to pass the day. When they returned at 7:30 p. m. to their apartment on the top floor of the five-story building, their son was lying dead on the kitchen floor, a suicide by gas.

He had shoved the kitchen table close to the stove, pulled a chair up to the table, placed a pillow on the table and opened the stove's jets

Rereading the Dean of Canterbury's Cable

to *New Masses* two weeks ago, we want to take up his challenge. Let America speak up for stopping the war before it drags us in. Send your letters TODAY, get your friends to do likewise. *New Masses* will print them. WE CAN and we WILL organize America to keep out of this war, to resist the forces that want us to do their fighting. KEEP OUT OF THE WAR, KEEP ABREAST OF THE TRUTH.

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

Keep Abreast of the Truth