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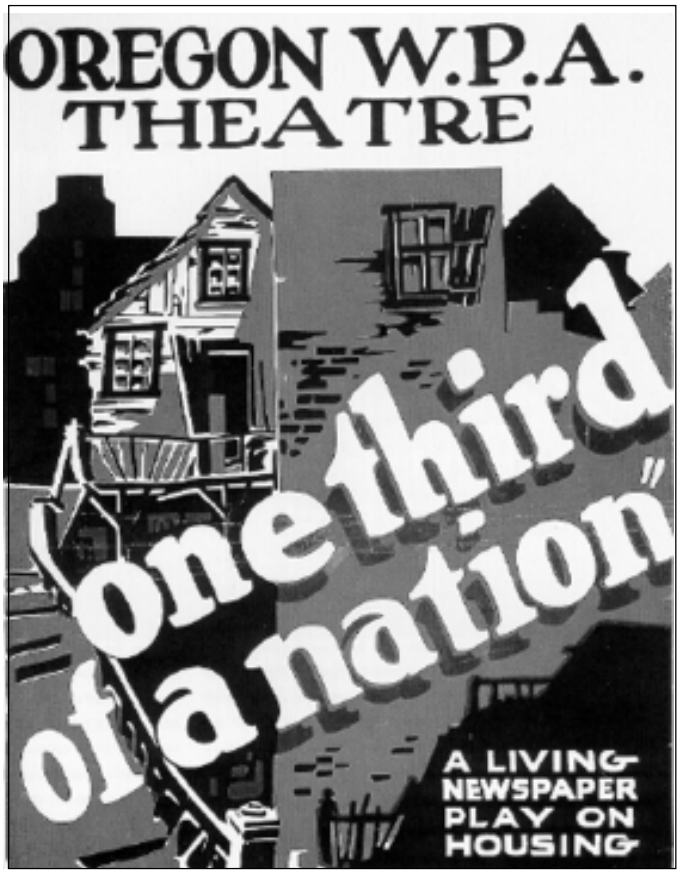
THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE ARTS

A Unit of Study for Grades 8-12

Robert Gabrick
Barbara Markham
James Curtis



Organization of American Historians
and the
National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: "One-Third of a Nation," poster for a New Deal "Living Newspaper" play on housing.

Library of Congress

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This publication is the result of a collaborative effort between the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) at the University of California Los Angeles and the Organization of American Historians (OAH) to develop teaching units based on primary documetns for United States History eduaion at the pre-collegiate level. Damon Freeman, of OAH and Indiana University, provided a careful reading of the text.

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Introduction

Approach and Rationale

The National Center for History in the Schools and the Organization of American Historians have developed the following collection of lessons for teaching with primary sources. Our units are the fruit of a collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of United States History. They represent specific "dramatic episodes" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying a crucial turning-point in history the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic episodes that bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

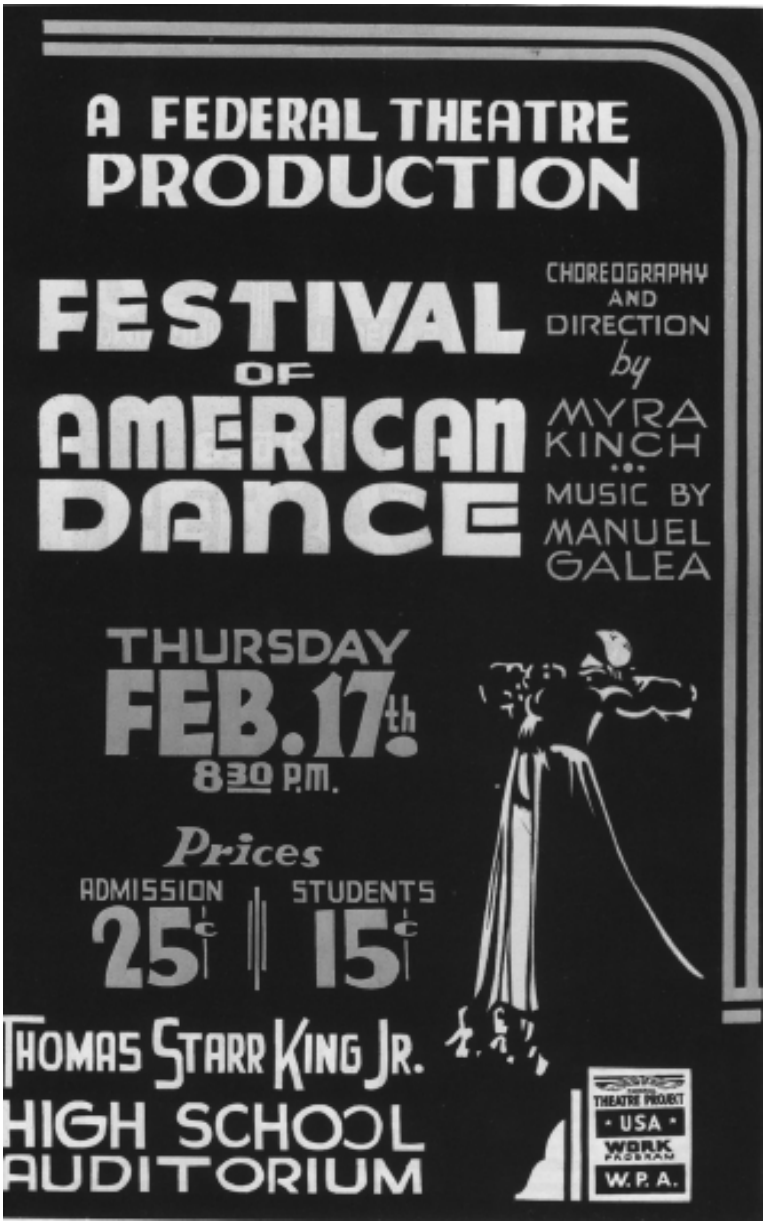
Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, and literature from the period under study. What we hope you achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

Content and Organization

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, and 5) Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 8-12, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

The teacher background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific "dramatic moment" to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The lesson plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.



Los Angeles Federal Theatre Project, WPA, 1937
National Archives, Records of the Work Projects Administration

Teacher Background Materials

I. Unit Overview

And then the Depression came." This familiar lament more than distinguishes one decade from another. Within its meaning are the images and realities of disaster: the crash of the stock market, the howl of the dust storms, the cry of the hungry, the silence of the shamed. Thousands of Americans watched their destinies evaporate. The horizon of prosperity looming "just around the corner" seemed to fade from view. While the Depression may have jolted many out of the American Dream, its pattern of unemployment, frustration, and despair was neither a universal nor identical condition.

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was the political response to the Great Depression. Establishing the foundation of the modern welfare state while preserving the capitalist system, the New Deal experimented with unprecedented activism in an attempt to relieve the social and economic dislocation experienced by "one-third of the nation." Federal programs extended not only into American business, agriculture, labor, and the arts; but into people's daily lives. Despite a mixed legacy with respect to recovery and reform, the political response under Roosevelt proved that economic crisis did not require Americans to abandon democracy. Moreover, American popular culture during the 1930s revealed that economic and social "hard times" did not cause an abandonment of imagination, humor, or fun.

The material in this unit is designed to impress upon students the varying effects of the Great Depression and New Deal on the lives of ordinary Americans. The unit's focus is primarily (but not exclusively) on the people rather than the policies, especially their fears, uncertainties, resilience, commonality of suffering, and survival. Individual lessons ask students to make inferences and to develop historical perspectives based upon evidence. The New Deal's documentary impulse and funding for the arts provide a unique opportunity for students to expand their skills in "reading" the visual and literary records of the 1930s. Still, it is important to note that the exercise of documenting the Great Depression gained momentum as the crisis wore on. What students see and read as records of life in the thirties tells only part of the story.

II. Unit Context

This unit concerns artistic and political responses to the worst economic crisis in American history. These lessons fit into the context of a larger unit on the Great Depression. Teachers should introduce these lessons after examining the causes of the Great Depression. Students will then be offered not just an experience (however limited) of depression-era life, but historical antecedents for contemporary debates over the proper role of government in business, labor, agriculture, the arts, and individual's lives.

III. CORRELATION TO NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR UNITED STATES HISTORY

This unit is designed to correlate with Era 8: Standard 1B of the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). In seeking to "understand how American life changed during the 1930s" students will utilize materials and activities which provide opportunities to (a) "explain the effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl on American farm owners, tenants, and sharecroppers," and (b) "explain the cultural life of the Depression years in art, literature, and music, and evaluate the government's role in promoting artistic expression."

This unit cannot provide all of the possible ways to understand how American life changed during the 1930s; nor all the ways the New Deal addressed the Great Depression. It does offer a variety of documentary source materials--plays, literature, public record, and writings--to enable students to analyze significant aspects of life in the 1930s and some New Deal responses. This unit also provides a variety of options enabling teachers and students to go beyond the documents provided and extend the lessons.

Lessons provide active learning strategies. Reading, writing, role playing, and creating visual exhibits are some of the activities which challenge students to think on a variety of levels utilizing different approaches for different learning styles.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To explore the effects of the Great Depression and New Deal on ordinary Americans.
- To understand how some aspects of American life changed during the 1930s.
- To explain aspects of the cultural life of the Depression years and debate the government's role in promoting artistic expression.
- To identify cultural trends of the 1930s by analyzing the documentary expression in the arts.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. Documentary Film—"The Plow that Broke the Plains"
2. Documenting the Migrant Experience
3. Film Study of the Grapes of Wrath
4. The New Deal's Federal Theater Project

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE ARTS

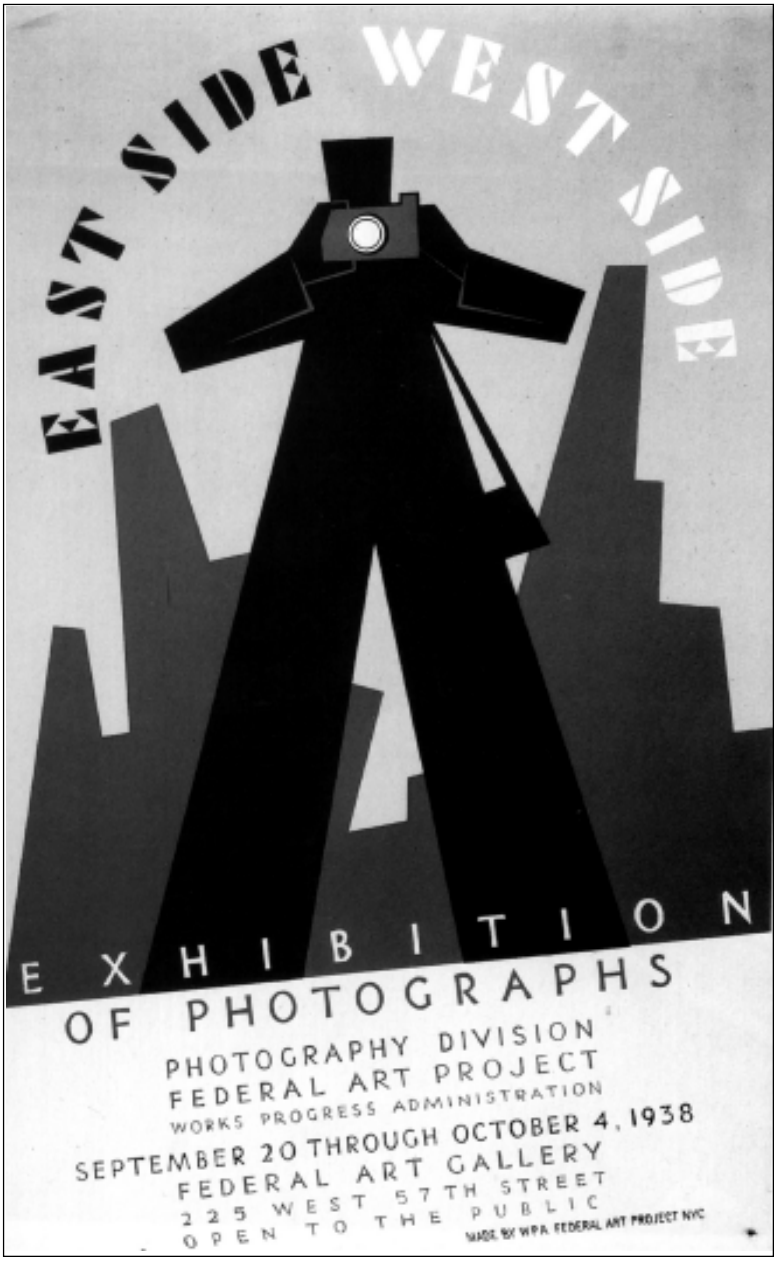
The 1930s marked the worst economic collapse experienced by this nation. Un employment peaked at nearly 25% and hovered above 15% throughout the decade. Many a "forgotten man" disappeared into the Depression. Wavering confidence in the nation's political and economic institutions called for bold experimentation and compelling leadership. Although Roosevelt's New Deal measures never brought the country to complete recovery, government activism that produced Social Security, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), direct relief, labor reform, work projects, housing, and agricultural subsidies was unprecedented. Many saw Roosevelt as a savior who genuinely cared about the American public. To them, his voice over the airwaves gave reassurance that the values defining the American political experiment and cultural identity would prevail.

Under the New Deal, the notion of work expanded beyond the construction of roads, bridges, dams, and buildings. Government patronage for the arts inspired creativity, provided entertainment, and promoted American culture. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) became the New Deal's largest employment agency. Under the WPA the Federal Art Project, the Federal Writers' Project, the Federal Theatre Project, and the Federal Music Project employed thousands of artists, writers, actors, film makers, musicians, and dancers. Other government agencies also supported aesthetic endeavors. The Resettlement Administration (RA), later absorbed by the Farm Security Administration (FSA), produced documentary photographs, and the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture commissioned post office murals. Not only did this New Deal for the arts put Americans to work, it also celebrated American workers, the nation's history, its talents, and its diversity. Arts projects did not necessarily ennoble ordinary lives, but these lives became the subjects for plays, interviews, murals, and photographs, producing a documentary record of how the Great Depression affected them.

Like other New Deal remedies, however, the arts programs endured controversy. Critics charged that these programs were wasteful, amateurish, or that they flagrantly promoted the New Deal agenda and radical politics. At the same time, independent artists such as John Steinbeck and John Ford, who found creative inspiration in these socially conscious times, came under fire from forces who saw their work as leftist dogma disguised as art. However, the America that wasn't on the breadlines generally embraced the trend by artists to record the American that was. And even those who eked out a living on government relief sometimes found it possible to listen to the radio, go to the "pictures" (movies), enjoy "the funny papers," or read popular fiction from the Book-of-the-Month Club.

The New Deal had its weaknesses. It failed to alleviate the protracted poverty of migrant workers and urban poor, and either excluded or restricted access to relief agencies by racial minorities and women. Roosevelt's "court packing" scheme threatened to undermine the system of checks and balances. Even the Keynesian

experiment of deficit financing, which fueled the successful war economy, resulted in reliance on government spending as policy, rather than careful application of deficit spending as an emergency action. Nevertheless, at a time when fascism seemed to some like the most expedient solution to economic crisis, the New Deal proved that capitalism and democracy could adapt and survive.



East Side West Side Exhibition of Photographs
Anthony Velanis, New York City Federal Art Project, WPA, 1938
Library of Congress

DRAMATIC MOMENT

The subject of the New Deal's Federal Theatre Project's Living Newspaper production of *One-Third of a Nation* focused on Franklin Roosevelt's second inaugural address in which he remarked:

> . . . In this nation I see tens of millions of citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.
>
> I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hands over them day by day.
>
> I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.
>
> I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.
>
> I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.
>
> I see one-third of a nation ill-houses, ill clad, ill-nourished.

In the Living Newspaper production the characters "Little Man," and "Mrs. Buttonkooper" discuss the issue raised in the inaugural address. The play concludes with a comment from an off stage voice called the "Loudspeaker."

> LITTLE MAN: By golly, that's right. According to what we've seen here tonite people have been going around for a hundred years or more—taking notes, making surveys—but nobody's ever done anything!
>
> MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: That's it. What good are all those surveys and speeches to us when we've got to live in a place almost as bad as that twenty-four hours a day! . . . What good are all those new laws that nobody obeys when maybe those kids are going to turn out to be crooks or murderers!
>
> LITTLE MAN: Sure! And what good are all those housing bills that take care of less than two percent of the trouble? What good are they when we still have this? (Points to tenement.)
>
> MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Look at it—and don't forget that isn't only New York. It's Philadelphia and Chicago and Boston and St. Louis! According to a man named Roosevelt, it's one-third of a nation! . . .
>
> LITTLE MAN: (pause) Well, what are we going to do about it? . .
> MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: (interrupting): You know what we're go-

ing to do—you and me? We're going to holler. And we're going to keep on hollering until they admit in Washington it's just as important to keep a man alive as to kill him!

LITTLE MAN: Will that do any good?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Sure it will. If we do it loud enough!

LITTLE MAN: Do you think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: They'll hear us all right if we all do it together—you and me and LaGuardia and Senator Wagner and the Housing Authorities and the Tenant Leagues and everybody who lives in a place like that! (Pointing to tenement, TENANTS start to fill the tenement as lights come up on it.)

LITTLE MAN: (excitedly): All right, all right, when do we begin?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Right now.

LITTLE MAN: *Now?*

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: *Now!* (Shouting) We want a decent place to live in! I want a place that's clean and fit for a man and a woman and kids! . . .

LITTLE MAN: Do you think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: And if we don't *make* them hear us you're going to have just what you've always had—slums—disease—crime—juvenile delinquency. . . .

LOUDSPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, this might be Boston, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia—but let's just call it, "one-third of a nation!"

Source: Buttitta, Tony, and Barry Witham. *Uncle Sam Presents: A Memoir of the Federal Theatre, 1935-1939*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

Lesson One: Documentary Film—"The Plow that Broke the Plains"

A. Lesson Objectives

- To explain the effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl on American farm owners, tenants, and sharecroppers.
- To examine how the New Deal Resettlement Administration documented and dramatized the Dust Bowl.
- To analyze documentary film focusing on the elements of script, music and visual imagery.

B. Background Information

Charles Dickens begins *The Tale of Two Cities* with "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The Great Depression was a devastating experience for many. The 1930s was a time of grinding poverty and suffering yet it was also a period of incredible creativity for the arts. Part of this creative effort was a movement to document the devastation brought about by the Depression.

This documentary movement is most visible in the many photographs taken as part of the Historical Section of the Resettlement Administration (RA) and its successor the Farm Security Administration (FSA). Often reprinted, these photographs provide most people with their images of the Great Depression and the efforts of the New Deal to solve the Great Depression's problems.

Rexford Guy Tugwell, director of the Resettlement Administration (RA) and John Franklin Carter, the RA's Office of Information Director, decided that more than still photographs were needed to document and dramatize the Dust Bowl. They chose Pare Lorentz to produce a film documenting the drought conditions affecting the Great Plains. The result was what has become a classic documentary film, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. Shown first for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in March 1936, distribution was hampered by Hollywood executives who feared commercial competition and argued it was government propaganda. Eventually commercial distribution did occur. Documenting the serious conditions of the Dust Bowl and raising larger issues about the role of laissez-faire capitalism and individualism, *The Plow that Broke the Plains* became an effective tool in the New Deal's efforts to "fix" the broken Plains.

This lesson gives students the opportunity examine a film script to see how the problems and potential solutions to the Dust Bowl were presented by a New Deal agency.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES (2 days)

Distribute copies of the film script (Document 1) and the "Reading the Script" questions to students (Student Handout 1). Have students write their answers to the questions and conduct a discussion based upon their work.

After this analysis activity, students can view the film. The key task for students is to have them analyze the visual imagery and relate it to the script. View the film in sections based upon the script. Ask students to analyze the visual imagery, the music, and the text as a coherent, integrated document.

Have students write the answers to the "Making Inferences" questions (Student Handout 2). Conduct a discussion based on student responses.

D. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

To extend the lesson focus, students can relate "The Plow that Broke the Plains" to 1930s films in general.

Have students view and compare and contrast Lorentz's film "The River."

Have students compare and contrast other films. Andrew Bergman's *We're in the Money: Depression America and its Films* provides categories and themes that are very useful for analysis. It is not necessary to show complete films in class. The most effective presentations are brief clips illustrating major themes of analysis. Students can select film clips which illustrate the themes identified below. Such an extended look at 1930s film would require research work done by students and / or teachers outside of class. A class period could cover film clips and analysis of a number of films. These can be student based presentations or primarily teacher led. Students can also be given research tasks to find and present other films on each genre.

Give the students the theme or themes, helping them to understand their basic meaning. Students would view the films for homework and select brief clips which illustrate the themes. Student reports to the class would feature film clips and explanations about how the film presents the particular theme. A number of these reports can be done in one class period.

You may wish to choose from the following:

1. Gangsters
   Themes: Concern for law and violence
   Mobility and the failure of legitimate institutions
   Film: "Little Caesar"

2. Urban civilization
   Themes: The moral weakness of the city
   The corrupt evil-doers who live in cities
   Film: "Lawyer-Man"

3. Anarcho-Nihilist Comedies
   Themes: Comedies reflecting bitterness and despair of the 1930s
   The purposefulness of chaos
   Film: "Duck Soup"

4. Musicals
   Theme: Escapism but reflecting the facts of life of the Great Depression
   Film: "Gold Diggers of 1933"

E. RESOURCES

The following resources will assist in the development of this lesson:

Bergman, Andrew. *We're in the Money: Depression, America and Its Films*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971.

Lorentz, Pare. *FDR's Moviemaker: Memoirs and Scripts*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992.

Muscio, Giuliana. *Hollywood's New Deal*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

"The Plow that Broke the Plains"
Film Script

I: PROLOGUE
This is a record of land...
of soil, rather than people
a story of the Great Plains:
the 400,000,000 acres of wind-swept grass lands that spread up
from the Texas Panhandle to Canada...
A high, treeless continent,
without rivers, without streams...
A country of high winds, and sun...
and of little rain...
By 1880 we had cleared
the Indian, and with
him, the buffalo, from
the Great Plains, and
established the last frontier...
A half million square
miles of natural range...
This is a picturization of
what we did with it.

II: GRASS
The grass lands...
a treeless wind-swept continent of grass
stretching from the broad Texan Panhandle
up through mountain reaches of Montana
and to the Canadian Border.
A country of high winds and sun...
High winds and sun...
without rivers, without streams,
with little rain.

III. CATTLE
First came the cattle...
an unfenced range a thousand miles long...
an uncharted ocean of grass,
the southern range for winter grazing
and the mountain plateaus for summer.
It was a cattleman's Paradise.
Up from the Rio Grande...
in from the rolling prairies...
down clear from the eastern highlands
the cattle rolled into the old buffalo range.
Fortunes in beef.
For a decade the world discovered the grass lands
and poured cattle into the plains.

The railroads brought markets to the edge of the plains...
land syndicates sprang up overnight
and the cattle rolled into the West.

IV: HOMESTEADERS
The railroad brought the world into the plains
...new populations, new needs crowded
the last frontier.
Once again the plowman followed the herder
and the pioneer came to the plains.
Make way for the plowman!
The first fence.
Progress came to the plain.
Two hundred miles from water,
two hundred miles from home,
but the land is new.
High winds and sun...
High winds and sun...
a country without rivers and with little rain.
Settler, plow at your peril!

V: WARNING
Many were disappointed.
The rains failed...
and the sun baked the light soil.
Many left...they fought the loneliness
and the hard years...
But the rains failed them.

VI: WAR
Many were disappointed, but the great day
was coming...the day of new causes-
new profits-new hopes.
“Wheat will win the war!”
“Plant wheat...”
“Plant the cattle ranges...”
“Plant your vacant lots...plant wheat!”
Wheat for the boys over there!”
“Wheat for the Allies!”
“Wheat for the British!”
“Wheat for the Belgians!”
“Wheat for the French!”
“Wheat at any price...”
“Wheat will win the war!”

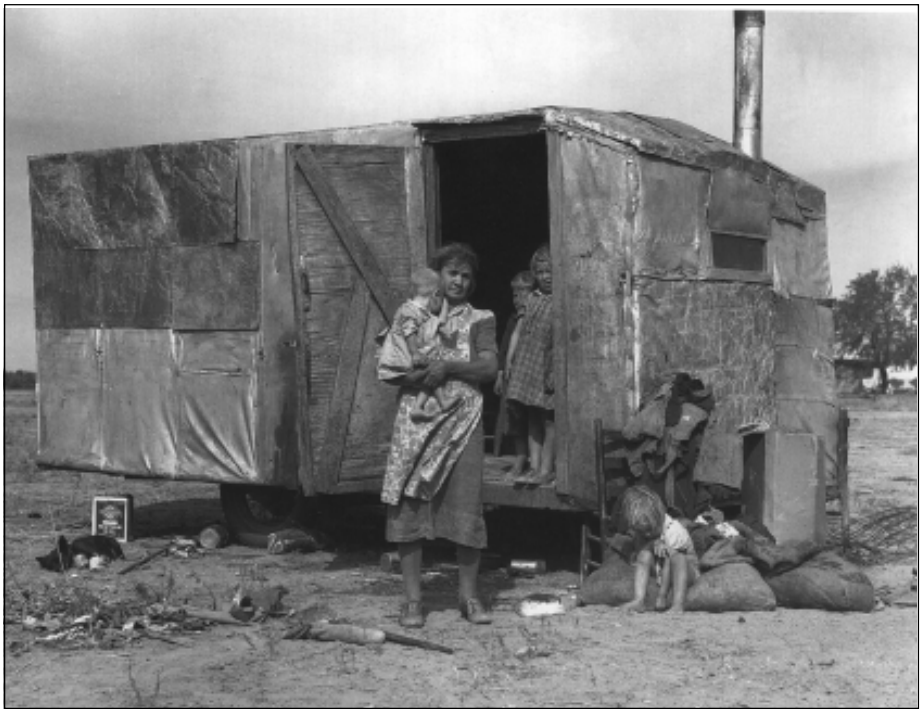
VII: BLUES
Then we reaped the golden harvest...
then we really plowed the plains...

we fumed under millions of new acres for war wheat.
We had the man-power...
we invented new machinery...
the world was our market.
By 1933 the old grass lands had become the new
wheat lands...a hundred million acres...
two hundred million acres...
More wheat!

VIII: DROUGHT
A country without rivers...without streams...
with little rain...
Once again the rains held off and the
sun baked the earth.
This time no grass held moisture against the
winds and the sun...this time millions of acres
of plowed land lay open to the sun.

IX: DEVASTATION
Baked out-blown out-and broke!
Year in, year out, uncomplaining they fought
the worst drought in history...
their stock choked to death on the barren land...
their homes were nightmares of swirling dust
night and day.
Many went ahead of it-but many stayed
until stock, machinery, homes, credit, food,
and even hope were gone.
On to the West!
Once again they headed for the setting sun
Once again they headed West.
Last year in every summer month
50,000 people left
the Great Plains and hit the highways
for the Pacific Coast, the last border.
Blown out-baked out-and broke. . .
nothing to stay for. . .nothing to hope for . . .
homeless, penniless and bewildered they joined
the great army of the highways.
No place to go . . . and no place to stop.
Nothing to eat . . . nothing to do . . .
their homes on four wheels . . . their work a
desperate gamble for a day's labor in the fields
along the highways. . .
The price of a sack of beans or a tank of gas
All they ask is a chance to start over

And a chance for their children to eat.
to have medical care, to have homes again.
50,000 a month!
The sun and winds wrote the most tragic chapter
in American agriculture.



A migratory family living in a trailer in an open field without sanitation or water
Dorothea Lange, 1940
Library of Congress

Reading the Script

Title

1. How does the film's title present the irony of the function of a plow and the devastation of the plains?

Prologue

2. Define the Great Plains (e.g. size, location, climate, etc.)

Grass

3. Why is this section a repeat of the Prologue?
4. What is the key feature of the Great Plains?

Cattle

5. Why is the Great Plains a "Cattleman's Paradise"?
6. What do cattle replace?
7. How does industrialism come to the Great Plains?
8. What changes does industrialism bring?

Homesteader

9. Who follows the cattleman?
10. What problems does this create?
11. Explain the warning, "Settler, plow at your peril!"

Warning

12. What warning did nature provide?
13. Was the warning heeded?

War

14. What war is this?
15. What happens because of the war?

Blues

16. This section tells of great success. What is it?
17. Why is this section called "Blues"?

Drought

18. Look back over the script. What words / phrases are repeated often? Why?
19. Why is the drought of the 1930s more devastating than previous Great Plains droughts?

Devastation

20. Describe the devastation.
21. What role does nature play? Humans?
22. What solution do people try?
23. "The sun and winds wrote the most tragic chapter in American agriculture." Is this tragedy only the work of nature? Explain.

Making Inferences

1. What are the lessons to be learned from this New Deal document? Consider its critique of capitalism and the values associated with capitalism.

2. What are the elements of this documentary film that would have made it such a critical and popular success?

3. Consider the script as a poem. Analyze those elements which are most effective as poetry.

4. Is the film government propaganda? Assume it is and evaluate its effectiveness as propaganda.

LESSON TWO: DOCUMENTING THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To examine information about the migrant experience during the 1930s.
- To analyze and evaluate the validity of primary source materials and to identify the point of view from which it was constructed.
- To recognize and assess multiple narratives regarding the migrant experience.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1936, The *San Francisco News* hired John Steinbeck to write a series of articles on the Dust Bowl migration. The seven article series, *The Harvest Gypsies*, provided the factual basis for *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Steinbeck began his research with an escorted two week tour of California's Central Valley visiting farms, labor camps, "Hoovervilles", and shantytowns. One camp visited was the Arvin Sanitary Camp—Weedpatch, built in fall 1935 as part of the New Deal's Resettlement Administration.

On this tour Steinbeck met Tom Collins, manager of the Weedpatch Camp. According to Jackson Benson, a Steinbeck biographer, Collins became the most important single source for *The Grapes of Wrath*. Collins traveled with Steinbeck on three trips around California observing camp operations, talking to residents, going to meetings, and even attending a weekend dance.

Collins collected statistics on many aspects of camp life which Steinbeck used as primary material for his newspaper series and *The Grapes of Wrath*. After the publication of *The Harvest Gypsies* Steinbeck and his wife drove west on Route 66 through Oklahoma and on to California. In 1937, he and Collins worked in the fields harvesting hops. They stayed at ranches, camps for squatters, and visited such cities as Bakersfield, Barstow, Blythe, and Needles. Later Steinbeck went to Visalia to help in response to severe flooding.

These experiences provided Steinbeck with the background needed to accurately depict the migrants and specifically a family like the Joads. Historians have provided evidence of the complexity of the migration story. James Gregory contends that the Dust Bowl migration was a media event of the 1930s. He argues for a distinction between the Dust Bowl and drought area and points out that only about 16,000 people from the Dust Bowl migrated to California. "While Steinbeck's Joad family were indeed an important element of migration—there were also many other participants who defied the popular image of the rural Dust Bowl migrant."[1] Gregory demonstrates that more than fifty percent came from urban and small town areas. He contends the migrants had a chain of connections (relatives) al-

[1] James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 15.

ready in California and that the automobile trip posed few problems usually taking only four days.

Catherine McNicol Stock extends the drought affected area. Arguing that conditions in the Northern plains were the worst, she says that "by 1940, one third of all farmers who owned their land had lost it to foreclosure; tenancy had risen to nearly fifty percent; more than 150,000 people had left the region forever; and the Federal government had spent $400 million to help those who stayed behind."[2]

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES (2 days)

The documents in this lesson include selections from John Steinbeck's "The Harvest Gypsies" and two readings from business periodicals, *Business Week* (July 3, 1937) and *Fortune* (April 1939).

Have students read each of "The Harvest Gypsies" articles (**Documents 2-5**), the news article from *Business Week* (**Document 8**), and the feature story from *Fortune* (**Document 7**).

While Steinbeck wrote seven articles only four are used in this lesson. If possible provide each student with his or her own copy of all the articles and have them underline or highlight specific passages. Written answers to the questions are useful for well focused discussions. Be sure students link their answers to the specific passages they have highlighted in the documents. These activities may be done individually or as part of cooperative / grouping centered strategies in which findings are shared and jigsawed together. Conduct a discussion comparing and contrasting these readings. Use student responses to the questions as a guide for class discussion.

Refer students to textbook accounts of Dust Bowl migrations or oral histories recounting the experiences of migrants. Do these accounts support or refute those of Steinbeck, *Business Week*, and *Fortune*? How would you assess the credibility of these accounts? To what extent did different motives, beliefs, and interests color the perspective of the reports?

[2] Catherine McNicol Stock, *Main Street in Crisis: The Great Depression and the Old Middle Class on the Northern Plains* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 17–18.

D. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Write "Letters to the Editor"

Students write letters to the *San Francisco News*, *Business Week*, or *Fortune* responding to the articles. Assign students different roles, such as:

- A social worker for the state of California working with migrants
- A Central Valley or Imperial Valley farmer who hires hundreds of migrant laborers
- A businessman--one of *Fortune's* or *Business Week's* typical readers at the upper management level of a major corporation
- A migrant / agricultural labor union organizer
- A mayor of a small California town close to migrant work camps (either shanty towns or government operated camps)
- A spokesman for the Associated Farmers Organization
- An unemployed laborer in San Francisco
- A business owner in a small town in the Central Valley or Imperial Valley

You may want to consider other roles to include political party members and people from Oklahoma, Arkansas, or the Dakotas, the origin of many of the migrants. Also more than one student may be assigned each role so that larger classes will still have all students write a letter.

As these student letters are shared and discussed have students consider the "voices" that are not likely to be heard in a "Letter to the Editor" section in either a newspaper or magazine. What are the implications of developing solutions to problems without hearing the voices of significant groups who are affected by the situation?

Conduct a "public hearing"

Simulate a public hearing on migration. Select a panel composed of a member of the school board, a representative from a public health agency, the local sheriff, and an elected city official who will serve as chair of the committee. Assign other members of the class roles from the "Letter to the Editor" activity and present the views of their "character" at the local public hearing. Conclude the activity by having students write a reflective essay on the migrant problem in which they must state a thesis and support it with information provided through the testimony presented at the public hearing, other materials in this lesson, and information gleaned from extended research.

E. RESOURCES

The following resources will assist in the development of this lesson:

Gregory, James N. *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Shindo, Charles. *Dust Bowl Migrants in the American Imagination*. Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 1997.

Steinbeck, John. *The Harvest Gypsies: On the Road to the Grapes of Wrath*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1988.

Stock, Catherine McNicol. *Main Street in Crisis: The Great Depression and the Old Middle Class on the Northern Plains*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

The Harvest Gypsies

ARTICLE 1

At this season of the year, when California's great crops are coming into harvest, the heavy grapes, the prunes, the apples, and lettuce and the rapidly maturing cotton, our highways swarm with the migrant workers, that shifting group of nomadic, poverty-stricken harvesters driven by hunger and the threat of hunger from crop to crop, from harvest to harvest, up and down the state and into Oregon so some extent, and into Washington a little. But it is California which has and needs the majority of these new gypsies. It is a short study of these wanderers that these articles will undertake. There are at least 150,000 homeless migrants wandering up and down the state, and that is an army large enough to make it important to every person in the state.

To the casual traveler on the great highways the movements of the migrants are mysterious if they are seen at all, for suddenly the roads will be filled with open rattletrap cars loaded with children and with dirty bedding, with fire-blackened cooking utensils. The boxcars and gondolas on the railroad lines will be filled with men. And then, just as suddenly, they will have disappeared from the main routes. On side roads and near rivers where there is little travel and squalid, filthy squatters' camp will have been set up, and the orchards will be filled with pickers and cutters and driers.

The unique nature of California agriculture requires that these migrants exist, and requires that they move about. Peaches and grapes, hops and cotton cannot be harvested by a resident population of laborers. For example, a large peach orchard which requires the work of 20 men the year round will need as many as 2000 for the brief time of picking and packing. And if the migration of the 2000 should not occur, if it should be delayed even a week, the crop will rot and be lost.

Thus, in California we find a curious attitude toward a group that makes our agriculture successful. The migrants are needed, and they are hated. Arriving in a district they find the dislike always meted out by the resident to the foreigner, the outlanders. This hatred of the stranger occurs in the whole range of human history, from the most primitive village farm to our own highly organized industrial farming. The migrants are hated for the following reasons, that they are ignorant and dirty people, that they are carriers of disease, that they increase the necessity for police and the tax bill for schooling in a community, and that if they are allowed to organize they can, simply by refusing to work, wipe out the season's crops. They are never received into a community nor into the life of a community. Wanderers in fact, they are never allowed to feel at home in the communities that demand their services.

Let us see what kind of people they are, where they come from, and the routes of their wanderings. In the past they have been of several races, encouraged to come and often imported as cheap labor; Chinese in the early period, then Filipinos, Japanese and Mexicans. These were foreigners, and as such they were ostracized and segregated and herded about.

If they attempted to organize they were deported or arrested, and having no advocates they were never able to get a hearing for their problems. But in recent years the foreign migrants have begun to organize, and at this danger signal they have been deported in great numbers, for there was a new reservoir from which a

great quantity of cheap labor could be obtained.

The drought in the middle west has driven the agricultural population of Oklahoma, Nebraska and parts of Kansas and Texas westward. Their lands are destroyed and they can never go back to them.

Thousands of them are crossing the borders in ancient rattling automobiles, destitute and hungry and homeless, ready to accept any pay so that they may eat and feed their children and everything that remains of their old life with them.

They arrive in California usually having used up every resource to get here, even to the selling of the poor blankets and utensils and tools on the way to buy gasoline. They arrive bewildered and beaten and usually in a state of semi-starvation, with only one necessity to face immediately, and that is to find work at any wage in order that the family may eat.

And there is only one field in California that can receive them. Ineligible for relief, they must become migratory field workers.

Because the old kind of laborers, Mexicans and Filipinos, are being deported and repatriated very rapidly, while on the other hand the river of dust bowl refugees increases all the time, it is this new kind of migrant that we shall largely consider.

The earlier foreign migrants have invariably been drawn from a peon class. This is not the case with the new migrants.

They are small farmers who have lost their farms. Or farm hands who have lived with the family in the old American way. They are men who have worked hard on their own farms and have left the pride of possessing and living in close touch with the land.

They are resourceful and intelligent Americans who have gone through the hell of the drought, have seen their lands wither and die and the top soil blow away; and this, to a man who has owned his land, is a curious and terrible pain.

And then they have made the crossing and have seen often the death of their children on the way. Their cars have been broken down and been repaired with the ingenuity of the land man.

Often they patched the worn-out tires every few miles. They have weathered the thing, and they can weather much more for their blood is strong.

They are descendants of men who crossed into the middle west, who won their lands by fighting, who cultivated the prairies and stayed with them until they went back to desert.

And because of their tradition and their training, they are not migrants by nature. They are gypsies by force of circumstances.

In their heads, as they move wearily from harvest to harvest, there is one urge and one overwhelming need, to acquire a little land again, and to settle on it and stop their wandering. One has only to go into the squatters' camps where the families live on the ground and have no homes, no beds and no equipment; and one has only to look at the strong purposeful faces, often filled with pain and more often, when they see the corporation-held idle lands, filled with anger, to know that this new race is here to stay and that heed must be taken of it.

It should be understood that with this new race and old methods of repression, of starvation wages, of jailing, beating and intimidation are not going to work; these are American people. Consequently we must meet them with understanding and attempt to work out the problem to their benefit as well as ours.

It is difficult to believe what one large speculative farmer has said, that the success of California agriculture requires that we create and maintain a peon class. For if this is true, then California must depart from the semblance of democratic government that remains here.

The names of the new migrants indicate that they are of English, German, and Scandinavian descent. There are Munns, Holbrooks, Hansens, Schmidts.

And they are strangely anachronistic in one way: Having been brought up on the prairies where industrialization never penetrated, they have jumped with no transition from the old agrarian, self-containing farm where nearly everything used was raised or manufactured, to a system of agriculture so industrialized that the man who plants a crop does not often see, let alone harvest, the fruit of his planting, where the migrant has no contact with the growth cycle.

And there is another difference between their old life and the new. They have come from the little farm districts where democracy was not only possible but inevitable, where popular government, whether practiced in the Grange, in church organization or in local government, was the responsibility of every man. And they have come into the country where, because of the movement necessary to make a living, they are not allowed any vote whatever, but are rather considered a properly unprivileged class.

Let us see the fields that require the impact of the labor and the districts to which they must travel. As one little boy in a squatters' camp said, "When they need us they call us migrants, and when we've picked their crop, we're bums and we got to get out."

There are the vegetable crops of the Imperial Valley, the lettuce, cauliflower, tomatoes, and cabbage to be picked and packed, to be hoed, and irrigated. There are several crops a year to be harvested, but there is not time distribution sufficient to give the migrants permanent work.

The orange orchards deliver two crops a year, but the picking season is short. Farther north, in Kern County and up the San Joaquin Valley, the migrants are needed for grapes, cotton, pears, melons, beans, and peaches.

In the outer valley, near Salinas, Watsonville, and Santa Clara there are lettuce, cauliflowers, artichokes, apples, prunes, apricots. North of San Francisco, the produce is grapes, deciduous fruits and hops. The Sacramento Valley needs masses of migrants for its asparagus, its walnuts, peaches, prunes, etc. These great valleys with their intensive farming make their seasonal demands on migrant labor.

A short time, then, before the actual picking begins, there is the scurrying on the highways, the families in open cars hurrying to be first at work. For it has been the habit of the growers associations of the state to provide by importation, twice as much labor as was necessary, so that wages might remain low.

Hence the hurry, for if the migrant is a little late the places may all be filled and he will have taken his trip for nothing. And there are many things that may happen even if he is in time. The crop may be late, or there may occur one of those situations like that at Nipomo last year when twelve hundred workers arrived to pick the pea crop only to find it spoiled by rain.

All resources having been used to get to the field, the migrants could not move on; they stayed and starved until government aid tardily was found for them.

And so they move, frantically, with starvation close behind them. And in this series of articles we shall try to see how they live and what kind of people they are,

what their living standard is, what is done for them and to them, and what their problems and needs are. For while California has been successful in its use of migrant labor, it is gradually building a human structure which will certainly change the State, and may, if handled with the inhumanity and stupidity that have characterized the past, destroy the present system of agricultural economics.

—Source: *San Francisco News,* 1936. Reprinted by permission of McIntosh and Otis, Inc.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

1. How does Steinbeck describe the migrant workers? What terms does he use? What characterstics do they have?

2. How many migrants are there?

3. What is the unique nature of California agriculture which requires migrants?

4. What is the "curious attitude" toward migrants?

5. Why are migrants "hated?"

6. How do 1930s migrants differ from past migrant groups? Consider: race / ethnicity, marital / family status, gender.

7. How has industrialism impacted migrants in the Middle West and California?

8. What is the relationship of migrants to democracy?

9. How does the "growers association" apply the law of supply and demand?

Making Inferences

1. New Deal programs such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) provided money to aid landowners. How might that affect tenants and sharecroppers?

2. How would reducing the amount of crops grown affect the mechanization of agriculture?

The Harvest Gypsies

ARTICLE 2

The squatters' camps are located all over California. Let us see what a typical one is like. It is located on the banks of a river, near an irrigation ditch or on a side road where a spring of water is available. From a distance it looks like a city dump, and well it may, for the city dumps are the sources for the materials of which it is built. You can see a litter of dirty rags and scrap iron, of houses built of weeds, of flattened cans or of paper. It is only on close approach that it can be seen that these are homes.

Here is a house built by a family who have tried to maintain a neatness. The house is about 10 feet by 10 feet, and it is built completely of corrugated paper. The roof is peaked, the walls are tacked to a wooden frame. The dirt floor is swept clean, and along the irrigation ditch of in the muddy river the wife of the family scrubs clothes without soap and tries to rinse out the mud in muddy water. The spirit of this family is not quiet broken, for the children, three of them, still have clothes, and the family possesses three old quilts and a soggy, lumpy mattress. But the money so needed for food cannot be used for soap nor for clothes.

With the first rain the carefully built house will slop down into a brown, pulpy mush; in a few months the clothes will fray off the children's bodies while the lack of nourishing food will subject the whole family to pneumonia when the first cold comes.

Five years ago this family had fifty acres of land and a thousand dollars in the bank. The wife belonged to a sewing circle and the man was a member of the grange. They raised chickens, pigs, pigeons, and vegetables and fruits for their own use; and their land produced the tall corn of the middle west. Now they have nothing.

If the husband hits every harvest without delay and works the maximum time, he may make four hundred dollars this year. But if anything happens, if his old car breaks down, if he is late and misses a harvest or two, he will have to feed his whole family on as little as one hundred and fifty.

But there is still pride in this family. Wherever they stop they try to put the children in school. It may be that the children will be in a school for as much as a month before they are moved to another locality.

Here, in the faces of the husband and his wife you begin to see an expression you will notice on every face; not worry, but absolute terror of the starvation that crowds in against the borders of the camp. This man has tried to make a toilet by digging a hole in the ground near his paper house and surrounding it with an old piece of burlap. But he will only do things like that this year.

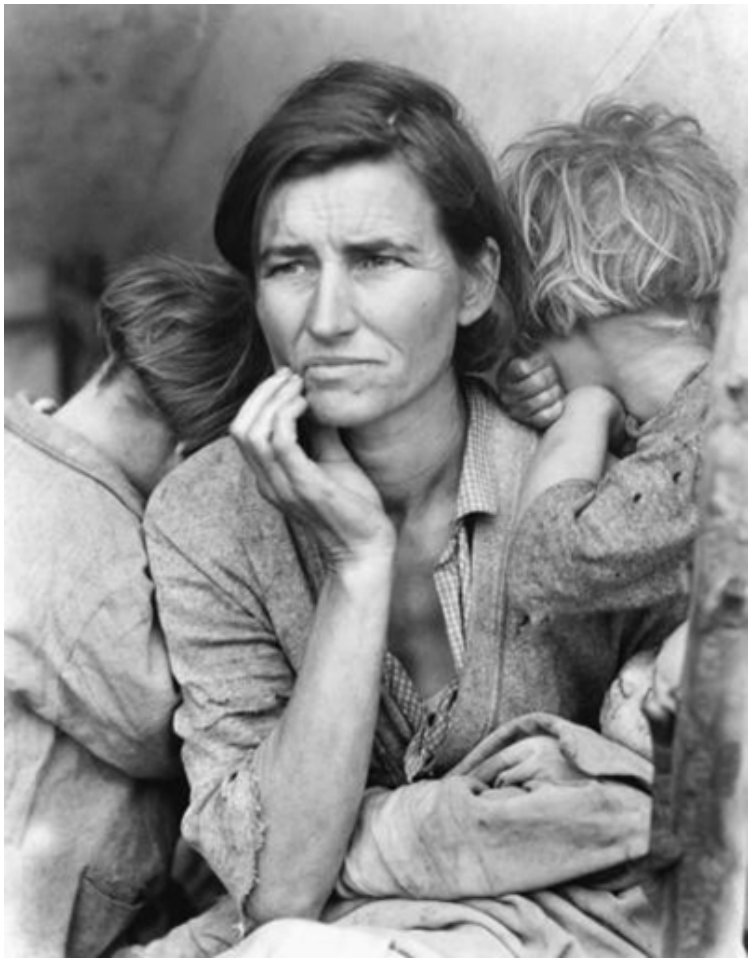
He is a newcomer and his spirit and decency and his sense of his own dignity have not been quite wiped out. Next year he will be like his next door neighbor.

This is a family of six; a man, his wife and four children. They live in a tent the color of the ground. Rot has set in on the canvas so that the flaps and the sides hand in tatters and are held together with bits of rusty baling wire. There is one bed in the family and that is a big tick lying on the ground inside the tent.

They have one quilt and a piece of canvas for bedding. The sleeping arrangement is clever. Mother and father lie down together and two children lie between them. Then, heading the other way, the other two children lie, the little ones. If the

mother and father sleep with their legs spread wide, there is room for the legs of the children.

There is more filth here. The tent is full of flies clinging to the apple box that is the dinner table, buzzing about the foul clothes of the children, particularly the baby, who has not been bathed nor cleaned for several days.



Migrant mother —Dorthea Lange, 1937
Library of Congress

The family has been on the road longer than the builder of the paper house. There is no toilet here, but there is a clump of willows nearby where human feces lie exposed to flies- the same flies that are in the tent.

Two weeks ago there was another child, a four year old boy. For a few weeks they had noticed that he was kind of lackadaisical, that his eyes were feverish.

They had given him the best place in the bed, between father and mother. But one night he went into convulsions and died, and the next morning the coroner's wagon took him away. It was one step down.

They know pretty well that it was a diet of fresh fruit, beans and little else that caused his death. He had no milk for months. With this death came a change of mind in his family. The father and mother now feel that paralyzed dullness with which the mind protects itself against too much sorrow and too much pain.

And this father will not be able to make a maximum of four hundred dollars a year any more because he is no longer alert; he isn't quick at piece-work, and he is not able to fight clear of the dullness that has settled on him. His spirit is losing caste rapidly.

The dullness shows in the faces of this family, and in addition there is a sullenest that makes them taciturn. Sometimes they still start the older children off to school, but the ragged little things will not go; they hide in ditches or wander off by themselves until it is time to go back to the tent, because they are scorned in the school.

The better-dressed children shout and jeer, the teachers are quite often impatient with these additions to their duties, and the parents of the "nice" children do not want to have disease carriers in the schools.

The father of this family once had a little grocery store and his family lived in back of it so that even the children could wait on the counter. When the drought set in there was no trade for the store any more.

This is the middle class of the squatters' camp. In a few months this family will slip down to the lower class.

Dignity is all gone, and spirit has turned to sullen anger before it dies.

The next door neighbor family of man, wife and three children of from three to nine years of age, have built a house by driving willow branches into the ground and wattling weeds, tin, old paper and strips of carpet against them.

A few branches are placed over the top to keep out the noonday sun. It would not turn water at all. There is no bed. Somewhere the family has found a big piece of old carpet. It is on the ground. To go to bed the members of the family lie on the ground and fold the carpet up over them.

The three year old child has a gunny sack tied about his middle for clothing. He has the swollen belly caused by malnutrition.

He sits on the ground in the sun in front of the house, and the little black flies buzz in circles and land on his closed eyes and crawl up his nose until he weakly brushes them away.

They try to get at the mucous in the eye-corners. This child seems to have the reactions of a baby much younger. The first year he had a little milk, but he has had none since.

He will die in a very short time. The older children may survive. Four nights ago the mother had a baby in the tent, on the dirty carpet. It was born dead, which was just as well because she could not have fed it at the breast; her own diet will not produce milk.

After it was born and she had seen that it was dead, the mother rolled over and lay still for two days. She is up today, tottering around. The last baby, born less than a year ago, lived a week. This woman's eyes have the glazed, far-away look of a sleep walker's eyes.

She does not wash clothes anymore. The drive that makes for cleanliness has been drained out of her and she hasn't the energy. The husband was a share-cropper once, but he couldn't make it go. Now he has lost even the desire to talk.

He will not look directly at you for that requires will, and will needs strength. He is a bad field worker for the same reason. It takes him a long time to make up his mind, so he is always late in moving and late in arriving in the fields. His top wage, when he can find work now, which isn't often, is a dollar a day.

The children do not even go to the willow clump any more. They squat where they are and kick a little dirt. The father is vaguely aware that there is a culture of hookworm in the mud along the river bank. He knows the children will get it on their bare feet.

But he hasn't the will nor the energy to resist. Too many things have happened to him. This is the lower class of the camp.

This is what the man in the tent will be in six months; what the man in the paper house with its peaked roof will be in a year, after his house washed down and his children have sickened or died, after the loss of dignity and spirit have cut him down to a kind of sub-humanity.

Helpful strangers are not well-received in this camp. The local sheriff makes a raid now and then for a wanted man, and if there is labor trouble the vigilantes may burn the poor houses. Social workers, survey workers have taken case histories.

They are filed and open for inspection. These families have been questioned over and over about their origins, number of children living and dead.

The information is taken down and filed. That is that. It has been done so often and so little has come of it.

And there is another way for them to get attention. Let an epidemic break out, say typhoid or scarlet fever and the country doctor will come to the camp and hurry the infected cases to the pest house. But malnutrition is not infectious, nor dysentery, which is almost the rule among the children.

The county hospital has no room for measles, mumps, whooping cough; and yet these are often deadly to hunger-weakened children. And although we hear much about the free clinics for the poor, these people do not know how to get the aid and they do not get it. Also, since most of their dealings with authority are painful to them, they prefer not to take the chance.

This is the squatters' camp. Some are a little better, some much worse. I have described three typical families. In some of the camps there are as many as three hundred families like these. Some are so far from water that it must be bought at five cents a bucket.

And if these men steal, if there is developing among them a suspicion and hatred of well-dressed, satisfied people, the reason is not to be sought in their origin nor in any tendency to weakness in their character.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

1. What are some of the characteristics of squatters' camps?

2. Compare and contrast the "three typical families" described by Steinbeck: focus on physical descriptions and the migrant's "spirit".

Making Inferences

1. Read the last paragraph. Why does Steinbeck suggest the migrant's situation is not based upon a "weakness in their character"?

—Source: *San Francisco News,* 1936. Reprinted by permission of McIntosh and Otis, Inc.

The Harvest Gypsies

ARTICLE 4

The federal government, realizing that the miserable conditions of the California migrant agricultural worker constitutes an immediate and vital problem, has set up two camps for the moving workers and contemplates eight more in the immediate future. The development of the camps at Arvin and at Marysville makes a social and economic study of vast interest.

The present camps are set up on leased ground. Future camps are to be constructed on land purchased by the Government. The Government provides places for tents. Permanent structures are simple, including washrooms, toilets and showers, an administration building, and a place where the people can entertain themselves. The equipment at the Arvin camp, exclusive of rent for the lank, costs approximately $18,000.

At this camp, water, toilet paper, and some medical supplies are provided. A resident manager is on the ground. Campers are received on the following simple conditions: (1) That the men are bona fide farm people and intend to work, (2) that they will help to maintain the cleanliness of the camp and (3) that in lieu of rent they will devote two hours a week towards the maintenance and improvement of the camp.

The result has been more than could be expected. From the first, the intent of the management has been to restore the dignity and decency that had been kicked out of the migrants by their intolerable mode of like.

In this series the word “dignity” has been used several times. It has been used not as some attitude of self-importance, but simply as a register of a man’s responsibility to the community.

A man herded about, surrounded by armed guards, starved and forced to live in filth loses his dignity; that is, he loses his valid position in regard to society and consequently his whole ethics towards society. Nothing is a better example of this than the prison, where the men are reduced to no dignity and where crimes and infractions of the rule are constant.

We regard this destruction of dignity, then, as one of the most regrettable results of the migrant’s life, since it does reduce his responsibility and does make him a sullen outcast who will strike at our Government in any way that occurs to him.

The example at Arvin adds weight to such a conviction. The people in the camp are encouraged to govern themselves, and they have responded with simple and workable democracy.

The camp is divided into four units. Each unit, by direct election, is represented in a central governing committee, an entertainment committee, a maintenance committee, and a Good Neighbor committee. Each of these members is elected by the vote of his unit, and is recallable by the same vote.

The manager, of course, has the right of veto, but he practically never finds it necessary to act contrary to the recommendations of the committee.

The result of this responsible self-government has been remarkable. The inhabitants of the camp came there beaten, sullen, and destitute. But as their social sense was revived they have settled down. The camp takes care of its own desti-

tute, feeding and sheltering those who have nothing with their own poor stores. The central committee makes the laws that govern the conduct of the inhabitants.

In the year that the Arvin camp has been in operation there has not been any need for outside police. Punishments are the restrictions of certain privileges such as admission to the community dances, or for continued anti-social conduct, a recommendation to the manager that the culprit be ejected from the camp.

A works committee assigns the labor to be done in the camp, improvements, garbage disposal, maintenance and repairs. The entertainment committee arranges for the weekly dances, the music for which is furnished by an orchestra made up of the inhabitants.

So well do they play that one orchestra has been lost to the radio already. This committee also takes care of the many self-made games and courts that have been built.

The Good Neighbors, a woman's organization, takes part in quilting and sewing projects, sees that destitution does not exits, governs, and watches the nursery, where children can be left while the mothers are working in the fields and in the packing sheds. And all of this is done with the outside aid of one manager and one part-time nurse. As experiments in natural and democratic self-government, these camps are unique in the United States.

In visiting these camps one is impressed with several things in particular. The sullen and frightened expression that is the rule among the migrants has disappeared from the faces of the Federal camps inhabitants. Instead there is a steadiness of gaze and a self-confidence that only come of restored dignity.

The difference seems to lie in the new position of the migrant in the community. Before he came to the camp he had been policed, hated and moved about. It had been made clear that he was not wanted.

In the Federal camps every effort of the management is expended to give him his place in society. There are no persons on relief in these camps.

In the Arvin camp the central committee recommended the expulsion of a family which applied for relief. Employment is more common than in any similar group for, having something of their own, these men are better workers. The farmers in the vicinity seem to prefer the camp men to others.

The inhabitants of the Federal camps are no picked group. The are typical of the new migrants. They come from Oklahoma. Arkansas, and Texas and the other drought states. Eight-five per cent of them are former farm owners, farm renters or farm laborers. The remaining 15 per cent include painters, mechanics, electricians, and even professional men.

When a new family enters one of these camps it is usually dirty, tired, and broken. A group from the Good Neighbors meets it, tells it the rules, helps it to get settled, instructs it in the use of the sanitary facilities; and if there are insufficient blankets or shelters, furnishes them from its own stores.

The children are bathed and cleanly dressed and the needs of the future canvassed. If the children have not enough clothes the community sewing circle will get busy immediately. In case any of the family are sick the camp manager or the part-time nurse is called and treatment is carried out.

These Good Neighbors are not trained social workers, but they have what is perhaps more important, an understanding which grows from a likeness of expe-

rience. Nothing has happened to the newcomer that has not happened to the committee.

A typical manager's report is as follows:

"New arrivals. Low in foodstuffs. Most of the personal belongings were tied up in sacks and were in a filthy condition. The Good Neighbors at once took the family in hand, and by 10 o'clock they were fed, washed, camped, settled and asleep."

These two camps each accommodate about 200 families. They were started as experiments, and the experiments have proven successful. Between the rows of tents the families have started little gardens for raising of vegetables, and the plots, which must be cared for after a 10 or 12 hours day of work, produce beets, cabbages, corn, carrots, onions, and turnips. The passion to produce is very great. One man, who has yet been assigned his little garden plot, is hopefully watering a jimpson weed simply to have something of his own growing.

The Federal Government, through the Resettlement Administration, plans to extend these camps and to include with them small maintenance farms. These are intended to solve several problems.

They will allow the women and children to stay in one place, permitting the children to go to school, and the women to maintain the farms during the work times of the men. They will reduce the degenerating effect of the migrants' life, they will reinstil the sense of government and possession that have been lost by the migrants.

Located near to the areas which demand seasonal labor, these communities will permit these subsistence farmers to work in the harvest, while at the same time they stop the wanderings over the whole state. The success of these Federal camps in making potential criminals into citizens make the usual practice of expending money on tear gas seen a little silly.

The greater part of the new migrants from the dust bowl will become permanent California citizens. They have shown in these camps an ability to produce and to cooperate. They are passionately determined to make their living on the land. One of them said, "If it's work you got to do, mister, we'll do it. Our folks never did take charity and this family ain't takin' it now."

The plan of the Resettlement Administration to extend these Federal camps is being fought by certain interests in California. The arguments against the camps are as follows:

That they will increase the need for locally paid police. But the two camps already carried on for over a year have proved to need no locally paid police whatever, while the squatters' camps are a constant charge of the sheriff's offices.

The second argument is that the cost of schools to the district will be increased. School allotments are from the state and governed by the number of pupils. And even if it did cost more, the communities need the work of these families and must assume some responsibility for them. The alternative is a generation of illiterates.

The third is that they will lower the land values because of the type of people inhabiting the camps. Those camps already established have in no way affected the value of the land and the people are of good American stock who have proved that they can maintain an American standard of living. The cleanliness and lack of disease in the two experimental camps are proof of this.

The fourth argument, as made by the editor of *The Yuba City Herald*, a self-admitted sadist who wrote a series of incendiary and subversive editorials concerning the Marysville camp, is that these are the breeding places for strikes.

Under pressure of evidence the Yuba City patriot withdrew his contention that the camp was full of radicals. This will be the argument used by the speculative growers' associations. These associations have said in so many words that they require a peon class to succeed. Any action to better the condition of the migrants will be considered radical to them.

—Source: *San Francisco News,* 1936. Reprinted by permission of McIntosh and Otis, Inc.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

This article focuses on the camps provided by the Federal government's Resettlement Administration. Steinbeck notes that "from the first, the intent of the management has been to restore the dignity and decency that had been kicked out of the migrants by their intolerable mode of life."

1. Why is this "intent" important?

2. What means are used to achieve this restoration?

3. What are the results of such efforts?

4. Why do "certain interests" oppose these camps?

5. What reply does Steinbeck make to these arguments?

The Harvest Gypsies

ARTICLE 5

Migrant families in California find that unemployment relief, which is available to settled unemployed, has little to offer them. In the first place there has grown up a regular technique for getting relief; one who knows the ropes can find aid from the various states and Federal disbursement agencies, while a man ignorant of the methods will be turned away.

The migrant is always partially unemployed. The nature of his occupation makes his work seasonal. At the same time the nature of his work makes him ineligible for relief. The basis for receiving most of the relief is residence.

But it is important for the migrant to accomplish the residence. He must move about the country. He could not stop long enough to establish residence or he would starve to death. He finds, then, on application, that he cannot be put on the relief rolls. And being ignorant, he gives up at that point.

For the same reason he finds that he cannot receive any of the local benefits reserved for residents of a county. The county hospital was built not for the transient, but for residents of the county.

It will be interesting to trace the history of one family in relation to medicine, work relief and direct relief. The family consisted of five persons, a man of 50, his wife of 45, two boys, 15 and 12, and a girl of six. They came from Oklahoma, where the father operated a little ranch of 50 acres of prairie.

When the ranch dried up and blew away the family put its moveable possessions in an old Dodge truck and came to California. They arrived in time for the orange picking in Southern California and put in a good average season.

The older boy and the father together made $60. At that time the automobile broke out some teeth of the differential and the repairs, together with three second-hand tires, took $22. The family moved into Kern County to chop grapes and camped in the squatters' camp on the edge of Bakersfield.

At this time the father sprained his ankle and the little girl developed measles. Doctors' bills amounted to $10 of the remaining store, and food and transportation took most of the rest.

The 15-year-old boy was now the only earner for the family. The 12-year-old boy picked up a brass gear in a yard and took it to sell.

He was arrested and taken before the juvenile court, but was released to his father's custody. The father walked in to Bakersfield from the squatters' camp on a sprained ankle because the gasoline was gone from the automobile and he didn't dare invest any of the remaining money in more gasoline.

This walk caused complications in the sprain which laid him up again. The little girl had recovered from measles by this time, but her eyes had not been protected and she had lost part of her eyesight.

The father now applied for relief and found that he was ineligible because he had not established the necessary residence. All resources were gone. A little food was given to the family by neighbors in the squatters' camp.

A neighbor who had a goat brought in a cup of milk every day for the little girl.

At this time the 15-year-old boy came home from the fields with a pain in his side. He was feverish and in great pain. The mother put hot cloths on his stomach

while a neighbor took the crippled father to the county hospital to apply for aid. The hospital was full, all its time taken by bona fide local residents. The trouble described as a pain in the stomach by the father was not taken seriously.

The father was given a big dose of salts to take home to the boy. That night the pain grew so great that the boy became unconscious. The father telephoned the hospital and found that there was no one on duty who could attend to his case. The boy died of a burst appendix the next day.

There was no money. The county buried him free. The father sold the Dodge for $30 and bought a $2 wreath for the funeral. With the remaining money he laid in a store of cheap, filling food--beans, oatmeal, lard. He tried to go back to work in the fields. Some of the neighbors gave him rides to work and charged him a small amount for transportation.

He was on the weak ankle too soon and could not make over $.75 a day at piece-work, chopping. Again he applied for relief and was refused because he was not a resident and because he was employed. The little girl, because of insufficient food and weakness from measles, relapsed into influenza.

The father did not try the county hospital again. He went to a private doctor who refused to come to the squatters' camp unless he were paid in advance. The father took two days' pay and gave it to the doctor who came to the family shelter, took the girl's temperature, gave the mother seven pills, told the mother to keep the child warm and went away. The father lost his job because he was too slow.

He applied again for help and was given one week's supply of groceries.

This can go on indefinitely. The case histories like it can be found in their thousands. It may be argued that there were ways for this man to get aid, but how did he know where to get it? There was no way for him to find out.

California communities have used the old, old methods of dealing with such problems. The first method is to disbelieve it and vigorously deny that there is a problem. The second method is to deny local responsibility since the people are not permanent residents. And the third and silliest of all is to run the trouble over the county borders into another county. The floater method of swapping what the counties consider undesirables from hand to hand is like a game of medicine ball.

A fine example of this insular stupidity concerns the hookworm situation in Stanislaus County. The mud along watercourses where there are squatters living is infected. Several business men of Modesto and Ceres offered as a solution that the squatters be cleared out. There was no thought of isolating the victims and stopping the hookworm.

The affected people were, according to these men, to be run out of the county to spread the disease in other fields. It is this refusal of the counties to consider anything but the immediate economy and profit of the locality that is the cause of a great deal of the unsolvable quality of migrants' problem. The counties seem terrified that they may be required to give some aid to the labor they require for their harvests.

According to several Government and state surveys and studies of large numbers of migrants, the maximum a worker can make is $400 a year, while the average is around $300, and the large minimum is $150 a year. This amount must feed, clothe and transport whole families.

Sometimes whole families are able to work in the fields, thus making an additional wage. In other observed cases a whole family, weakened by sickness and

malnutrition, has worked in the fields, making less than the wage of one healthy man. It does not take long at the migrants' work to reduce the health of any family. Food is scarce always, and luxuries of any kind are unknown.

Observed diets run something like this when the family is making money:

—Family of eight--Boiled cabbage, baked sweet potatoes, creamed carrots, beans, fried dough, jelly, tea.

—Family of seven--Beans, baking-powder biscuits, jam, coffee.

—Family of six--Canned salmon, cornbread, raw onions.

—Family of five--Biscuits, fried potatoes, dandelion greens, pears.

These are dinners. It is to be noticed that even in these flush times there is no milk, no butter. The major part of the diet is starch. In slack times the diet becomes all starch, this being the cheapest way to fill up. Dinners during lay-offs are as follows:

—Family of seven--Beans, fried dough.

—Family of six--Fried cornmeal.

—Family of five--Oatmeal mush.

—Family of eight (there were six children)-- Dandelion greens and boiled potatoes.

It will be seen that even in flush times the possibility of remaining healthy is very slight. The complete absence of milk for the children is responsible for many of the diseases of malnutrition. Even pellagra is far from unknown.

The preparation of food is the most primitive. Cooking equipment usually consists of a hole dug in the ground or a kerosene can with a smoke vent and open front.

If the adults have been working 10 hours in the fields or in the packing sheds they do not want to cook. They will buy canned goods as long as they have money, and when they are low in funds they will subsist on half-cooked starches.

The problem of childbirth among the migrants is among the most terrible. There is no prenatal care of the mothers whatever, and no possibility of such care. They must work in the fields until they are physically unable or, if they do not work, the care of the other children and of the camp will not allow the prospective mothers any rest.

In actual birth the presence of a doctor is a rare exception. Sometimes in the squatters' camps a neighbor woman will help at the birth. There will be no sanitary precautions nor hygienic arrangements. The child will be born on newspapers in the dirty bed. In case of a bad presentation requiring surgery or forceps, the mother is practically condemned to death. Once born, the eyes of the baby are not treated, the endless medical attention lavished on middle class babies is completely absent.

The mother, usually suffering from malnutrition, is not able to produce breast milk. Sometimes the baby is nourished on canned milk until it can eat fried dough and cornmeal. This being the case, the infant mortality rate is very great.

The following is an example: Wife of family with three children. She is 38; her face is lined and thin and there is a hard glaze on her eyes. The three children who survive were born prior to 1929, when the family rented a farm in Utah. In 1930 this woman bore a child which lived four months and dies of "colic."

In 1931 her child was born dead because "a han' truck fulla boxes run inta me two days before the baby come." In 1932 there was a miscarriage. "I couldn't carry

the baby 'cause I was sick." She is ashamed of this. In 1933 her baby lived a week. "Jus' died. I don't know what of." In 1934 she had no pregnancy. She is also a little ashamed of this. In 1935 her baby lived a long time, nine months.

"Seemed for a long time like he was gonna live. Big strong fella it seemed like." She is pregnant again now. "If we could get milk for um I guess it'd be better." This is an extreme case, but by no means an unusual one.

—Source: *San Francisco News,* 1936. Reprinted by permission of McIntosh and Otis, Inc.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

1. Why is relief not provided to migrants?

2. What is the response of California communities to migrant problems?

3. What reasons does Steinbeck give for the responses of California communities to migrant problems?

4. "The counties seem terrified that they may be required to give some aid to the labor they require for their harvest." What does Steinbeck mean by this?

"Flee Dust Bowl for California"

California business men are watching with mixed emotions the current influx of families from the Dust Bowl which, since Jan. 1, has brought more than 30,000 persons into the state. . . . The influx is now averaging one immigrant outfit every ten minutes, and the trek has only begun. . . . Many of the newcomers are competent farmers who have lost out in the drought and are seeking greener fields in California. They're eager to work for wages on the farms, to save what they can, and eventually buy land of their own. They're decidedly in the minority. The rank and file are out to seek their fortunes in a land where, so they have been told, living is easier. The relief office is the objective of many of these, and relief costs, especially in the San Joaquin counties, are rising. . . . [W]hen the Dust Bowl people show up at the San Joaquin farmer's door asking for work, they're usually welcome, especially as heretofore employers have had to transport most of their laborers to the fields. Experience has shown, too, that most of the newcomers won't have anything to do with farm labor organizers for a time, at least, and this condition may tend to relieve the pressure of the agricultural unions on California farmers during this harvest season. . . . The addition of so great an army of immigrants to the farm areas is stimulating certain lines of retail business. . . . The newcomers must eat. They must buy a certain amount of clothing (shelter, water, and wood are furnished by employers to those who work on the farms). The wages these people receive are providing many of them with the first real cash they've had in months, and they're eager to buy. Observers point out that much of this buying is not "healthy," that wages are going for down payments on radios, automobiles, cheap jewelry, rather than for necessities. On the other side of the picture, Mr. John Citizen, of the San Joaquin Valley, when questioned on the unprecedented immigration throws up his hands. For every worker that presents himself at the farmer's door asking for a job, another goes on relief with his entire family. . . . County hospitals are crowded with free patients, many of them maternity cases, neatly timed for arrival in California at the crucial moment. Schools are overwhelmed with new pupils. . . . A social worker asked one man why he had come to California. He pulled two newspaper clippings from his pocket, one from an Oklahoma paper and another from Texas. In them were unsigned advertisements painting in glowing terms the wonderful opportunities to be found in California. Are certain interests exploiting these people as ruthlessly as the steamship companies did during the days of the great immigrations from southern Europe two or three decades ago? Is there any doubt of it?"

Source: "Flee Dust Bowl for California," *Business Week*, Vol. 33, No. 409 (July 3, 1937), 36-37. Reprinted by permission of McIntosh and Otis, Inc.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

1. How does the *Business Week* article characterize Dust Bowl migrants?

2. What services are provided for migrants in California communities?

3. What are the problems associated with the influx of large number of migrant farm workers?

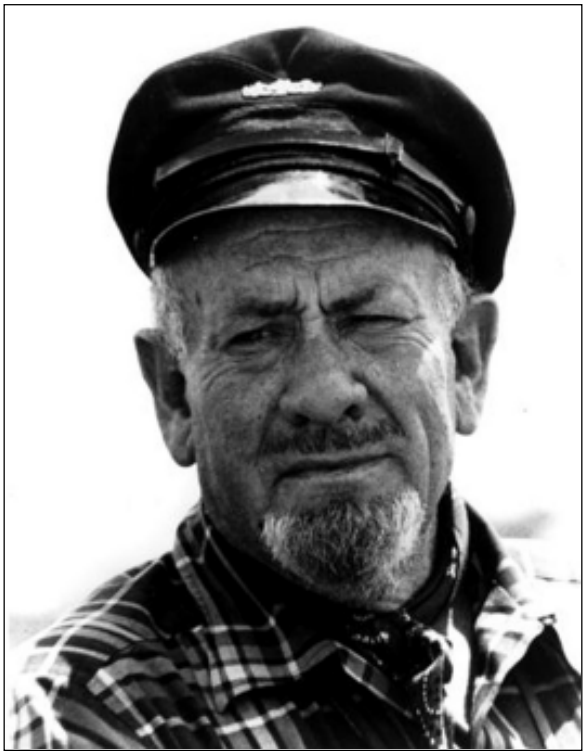
4. What impact does this migration have on California communities?

5. What is the impact of large numbers of migrant laborers on union organization in the state?

Making Inferences

1. What is the general impression given of most Dust Bowl migrants?

2. Contrast Steinbeck's views expressed in "The Harvest Gypsies" to those presented in the *Business Week* report. What accounts for the different perspectives?



John Steinback
Photographer unknown
Library of Congress

"Along the Road"

In April 1939, *Fortune* reported on its findings about the migrant problem in a lengthy article entitled "I Wonder Where We Can Go Now." The magazine sent a reporter to California to live among migrants in order to gather information for the article. The April issue of *Fortune* included excerpts from the reporter's notebook with the feature article. The following are from the reporter's notes.

In an effort to get located I went to the county camp near Shafter but when they found I did not have a tent but was living in my car they refused me admission on the grounds that it would be embarrassing to the people around me. I was just as glad as this camp was one of the dirtiest that I had seen. I decided to stay on the desert but I found that the health authorities were driving them off the desert and trying to get them into the county camp. I tried to get space in a pay camp. There I was told . . . I'd like to rent you a space but I'm full up. I charge $2 a month. I've had to turn away seventy-five people in the last few days." . . . So I decided to see if I could "make it on the desert." The idea was to drive out about a mile or two from town sometime around dusk and then set up camp. There would generally be a dozen or more others coming on right up until dark and soon their campfires could be seen.

One night I talked to a group of family people. There were three in the family, husband and wife, nineteen and eighteen respectively, and the boy's seventeen-year-old sister. . . . They gave the following as their yearly routine: spuds at Shafter, 'cots other side of Merced, Marysville for prunes and hops, then to the Big Valley (couldn't remember the name of it) for tomatoes. This took about six months of the year, which was their full working period. . . .

The costume of the men is almost uniform. The trousers are invariably blue jeans. These, like the rest of their clothes, are many times patched and mended, usually very neatly. The clothes of the young boys are replicas of their fathers' except that they may go barefooted occasionally.

. . . Several cases of typhoid have appeared in the area [Imperial Valley] since I have been here. This is due to their habit of drinking "ditchwater," or that water which flows through the irrigation ditches. An epidemic was avoided only because a great many were vaccinated. There are at least eight, and possibly more, cases of pellagra in the camp. The cure for this disease, which may be fatal, is green vegetables or red meat. However, they have eaten starchy foods for so long that they no longer have a taste for meats and vegetables. When the doctor told one woman to feed meat to her family, she replied that they didn't like meat and wouldn't eat it.

. . . These people aren't relief-minded. I've seen them around where relief was being given out. They'd ask what the line-up was about, then say, "I've got two bucks left, I expect to get work next week, I don't want no relief."

Source: "Along the Road: Extracts from a Reporter's Notebook," *Fortune*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (April 1939), 97-100.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understanding the Meaning

1. *Fortune* was and still is one of capitalism's most prestigious voices. Does its account of the migrants in general agree or disagree with Steinbeck's newspaper articles?

2. How does *Fortune* characterize migrants? Select statements you consider good examples of *Fortune's* characterization of the migrants. Focus on aspects of living conditions and their effect on people.

3. What does "Extracts from a Reporter's Notebook" tell you about the importance of sanitation and diet?

Making Inferences

1. What is the reporter's general impression of conditions among the migrants?

2. Compare and contrast the overall views of Steinbeck and *Fortune* about migrants. What is the point of view of Steinbeck? The *Fortune* author? Cite examples to support generalizations.

LESSON THREE: FILM STUDY OF "THE GRAPES OF WRATH"

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the effects of the Dust Bowl on tenant farmers by using a visual document.
- To analyze the film *The Grapes of Wrath* as a "cultural document" of its time.
- To view film critically by using a film guide to explore techniques and visual treatment of the migrant experience.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Few literary works of the 1930s received the acclaim earned by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Published in March 1939, the novel about Oklahoma migrants became a sensation, topping the best seller list by early May. Essentially a fictional account of current events, the work expressed outrage, sympathy, and optimism without being consciously polemical. Twentieth Century Fox bought the film rights in late April, gambling on the hope that this socially conscious work would translate well on to the screen. The renowned John Ford directed the film version which was released early in 1940. That same year the novel, still on the top ten best sellers' list, won the Pulitzer Prize. The film took Oscars for Best Director and Best Supporting Actress (Jane Darwell as Ma Joad).

Both Steinbeck and Ford denied trying to make a political statement with their art. However, historian Alan Brinkley notes, "To modern readers and viewers . . . *The Grapes of Wrath*, in all its versions, had become an unusually vivid historical document: a portrait of a portion of American society in the Great Depression and of a political sensibility that continues to resonate. . . ." In the context of teaching the 1930s, the novel and the film can illustrate the social themes of the Great Depression (migration, despair, poverty, individualism, conflict, community, solidarity, etc.).

Ideally, the film should be shown in class in order for students to discuss central themes, film techniques, character development, etc. If time does not permit the showing of the complete film, use the segments listed to modify the lesson.

The lesson is further enhanced if students have read the novel and can discuss the discrepancies between the text and the movie. Some critics charge that the film softened some of the novel's hard edge and political radicalism. Indeed, the ending is hopeful. Students should consider how changes in the nation's economy by 1939 may have influenced changes in the film script.

What makes this film valuable for teaching the thirties is not limited to its historical content or point of view. The film is a primary source, revealing a great deal about the times that inspired the story. But it also illustrates the technical art be-

hind the visual image. For example, a tight camera frame suggests confinement; silhouettes and chiaroscuro lighting cast a darkness to convey bleakness and intensity. Even the director's use of silence and sounds or the maneuvering of the camera's eye can help students analyze the film much in the same way that they analyze text and photography of the Great Depression. Although there is debate over the merits of its documentary realism, the film can serve as a "cultural artifact" of its times.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES (1-3 days)

The lesson includes a synopsis of the film and a time line, as well as timed segments with questions for adaptation. In preparation for viewing *The Grapes of Wrath* distribute copies of the film synopsis and timeline to students (**Student Handouts 3** and **4**). Because of their length, assign these for homework. Plan to devote class time going over the film synopsis. Use the timeline to clarify the drought and conditions in affected areas in particular the Dust Bowl and the "Black Blizzards."

If this lesson is conducted over several days, you might stop the film before the end of the class period and have students discuss their written observations. If students are too distracted to write while they are viewing, give them some quiet "power writing" time in the last minutes of the period to summarize what they have watched and/or discussed by using the film sheet as their guide. You might wish to provide the cast of characters on an overhead before the students actually begin viewing.

Before beginning the film, provide students with a list of questions as a viewing guide (**Student Handout 5**).

If you do not have the time to show the entire film in class, use the film segments listed below.[3]

D. FILM SEGMENTS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

Muley's Story: "The way it happened..." (5 minute 35 seconds)

1. What laws might Muley be referring to when he says, "The law that done it"?

2. How does Muley determine ownership of the land?

3. What is particularly discouraging about the failure of the tenant system?

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[3] Warren French in *Filmguide to The Grapes of Wrath* (1973) divides the film into fifty scenes grouping these into fifteen sequences. Consult French's book for more specific scenes and sequencing.

4. What is the effect on you (the viewer) of the (a) dramatic lighting used in this segment? (b) the image of Muley's family's shadow cast upon the land? and (c) his touching the land?

5. What do you notice about the conditions of the land?

Ma Reminisces on the Eve of Departure (1 minute, 40 seconds)

1. What is the effect of conducting the entire scene without dialogue?

2. What items does Ma keep, and what does she discard?

3. If you were reading this scene instead of watching the film, how might you construct Ma's "inner dialogue"? (In other words, what would be Ma's thoughts and feelings?)

Departure (7 minutes)

1. Why do you think Granpa suddenly resists leaving for California when originally he couldn't wait to leave?

2. How do the Joads' eventually get Granpa to go on the trip? Give examples in this scene of the Joads' resourcefulness, tenderness, generosity, intelligence and forbearance.

3. What is the significance of Route 66 being called "the Mother Road?" How does the camera work suggest movement and the passage of time?

Granpa's Death and Burial (3 minutes, 30 seconds)

1. What is the significance of Granpa's clutching the soil before he dies?

2. How do the Joads' try to give Granpa dignity in death?

3. How does the lighting in the film symbolize Granpa's death?

4. What is the significance of Casey's statement, "I'd pray for folks who's alive"?

Transient Camp Scene (4 minutes, 5 seconds)

1. Why would Woody Guthrie's song "Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way" be chosen for the film?

2. Where are other migrants from?

3. What irony do the Joads encounter at this camp?

4. What lessons of supply and demand are evidenced in the lament of the man returning from California?

Rest Stop and Restaurant Scene (3 minutes, 45 seconds)

1. How are the Joads treated by the gas station employee?

2. How do the Joads try to maintain dignity despite their poverty?

3. How does the waitress's attitude soften towards the Joads? Why do you think it did? Why does she tell Pa that the candy is "two for a penny"?

4. What illustrations of compassion are evidenced in this scene? How is Burt's kindness "repaid"?

At the Arizona Gas Station, Crossing the Desert, Granma's Death (7 minutes)

1. What comparisons to the Okies does the gas station employee make?

2. How does this disdain for the Okies' way of life encourage others towards them?

3. What is ironic about the description of the Okies in contrast to Ma's care for Granma as she dies?

4. How do the California inspectors treat the Joads after Ma insists that Granma is ill? Why does Ma lie to them?

Hooverville Transient Camp (5 minutes)

1. What is the effect of allowing the jalopy's anguished motor to provide the only sound of the Joads' arrival? What is the effect of the roving camera's eye while specters of human beings pass by the car in almost slow motion?

2. What theme is illustrated by Ma's willingness to share the family's leftovers with the starving children in the camp?

3. What is the effect on the viewer of having the camera linger over these faces? Is the camera a neutral narrator in this scene? Explain.

4. How are the authorities depicted in this scene? Why would the contractor accuse a worker of being an "agitator" for asking to see the contractor's license?

5. How does this scene illustrate the continuing theme of generosity and resourcefulness--as well as the irony of "wealth" among the indigent?

6. What is significant about the "supply and demand" lesson delivered by the "agitator"?

7. How does the policeman's statement, "Boy what a mess them .45s make" reflect the film's view of law enforcement?

Keene Peach Ranch (20 minutes)

1. How is the camera's eye used to convey the Joads' apprehensions and confusion as they enter the ranch during a strike?

2. What seems ominous about this scene and Tom's statement, "These are our own people"?

3. Why are the Joads called "scabs" by the strikers?

4. What do the background sounds of sirens and dogs barking suggest in this scene?

5. What are the economics lessons being taught in this scene?

6. Why would it appear that Casey continues to take risks and make sacrifices?

Arrival at Wheatpatch[4] and Tom's Departure (23 minutes)

1. What seems to be the reason why the Wheatpatch Camp differs from the other camps?

2. Whom does the camp director resemble? (Note to teacher: Students may recognize the FDR likeness in the camp's director, dressed in white pants and sweater.) Why might he be given the title "caretaker" in the film credits?

3. Why would Tom shut off the running faucet?

4. By the end of the film, what lessons relate to the American political climate of the 1930s? What was occurring in 1940 that might have made this film more of a political statement than John Ford intended.

5. What is the tone or the feeling of the final scene? What do you think was the director's intention by having Ma say, "We're the people that live" followed by a wide shot of a procession of migrants' jalopies?

6. What message does the film convey about the role of government in helping the needy migrants?

[4] In the novel the camp is Weedpatch, the movie refers to the camp as Wheatpatch.

E. Extension Activities

Use songs to enhance student understanding of the film and the larger issues of the Great Depression. Provide copies for students or use overheads of songs such as E. Y. Harburg and Jay Gorney's "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?", Alfred Hayes' "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night" or Woody Guthrie's "So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh" and "Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way."

Students can create movie posters to advertise *The Grapes of Wrath*. Display these in the classroom.

The film *Grapes of Wrath* presents one of the New Deal's programs to help migrants through the Resettlement Administration (RA). Wheatpatch is representative of a series of camps established by the RA. Students can investigate this program as an optional activity. Compare and contrast the RA program with nongovernmental efforts to establish migrant camps.

Research contemporary accounts of the Dust Bowl as recorded in contemporary periodicals such as *Life*, *Time*, *Business Week*, and *Fortune*. Compare these contemporary reports on the Dust Bowl and migrants to historical accounts.

Read John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* about the migrant farmers' strike in California's Salinas Valley. How does the tone of this novel differ from that of *The Grapes of Wrath*?

F. RESOURCES

The following resources will assist in the development of this lesson:

Carnes, Mark C. (ed). *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996, 224–227.

French, Warren. *Filmguide to The Grapes of Wrath*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Resch, Kenneth E., and Vicki D. Schicker. *Using Film in the High School Curriculum: A Practical Guide for Teachers and Librarians*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1992.

Rollins, Peter C. (ed.). *Hollywood as Historian*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985, 68–87.

The Grapes of Wrath
Film Synopsis

The Grapes of Wrath directed by John Ford and staring Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, Jane Darwell as Ma Joad, and John Carradine as Casey. Twentieth Century Fox, 1940.

The Grapes of Wrath Opening Sequence

This is the story of one farmer's family driven from their fields by natural disaster and economic changes beyond anyone's control. And their great journey in search of peace, security and another home.

The film opens with Tom Joad, out on parole, returning to his family's Oklahoma farm. En route, he encounters an acquaintance, Jim Casy, a former preacher. Together they arrive at Tom's home and through a fellow sharecropper, Muley, they learn that Tom's family has been forcibly evicted from their Oklahoma tenant farm and are staying at Tom's Uncle John's before heading for California to find work. Muley's account of "the way it [the eviction] happened to [him]" reveals the failure of the tenant system. Families are forced off their land by "the dusters"—the severe drought that struck the Great Plains region from 1934-1937. The official who warns Muley to leave before his home succumbs to the "cats" (Caterpillar tractors) doesn't "know who's to blame." An anonymous bureaucracy of companies, banks and "tin shield" deputies easily crushes those whose claim to the land is, as Muley says, "bein' born on it, and work'in on it and dyin' on it."

Tom and Casy make their way to Uncle John's where the family is resigned to make their new life in California. They are sad to leave, but encouraged by handbills which publicize the prospects of work in the vineyards and orchards. At Uncle John's the viewers meet the rest of the family: Ma, Pa, Uncle John, Granpa, Granma and siblings, Al, Rose-of-Sharon, Noah, Ruthie, Winfield, as well as "Rose-a-Sharn's" husband, Connie. The night before their trip Ma reminisces, holding on to seemingly worthless items that connect her to happier thoughts. Deprived of home and dignity, Ma is not deprived of memories.

The family, including Casy, leave for California, primarily on Route 66. Granpa, however, has a change of heart. Wrenching him from his land draws the life from his body and he dies, clutching the lifeless Oklahoma soil.

The family's next stop is a roadside camp where they first hear "the truth" behind the handbills. A man returning to Oklahoma relates his tragic experience in a system that holds no value for human life. The laws of supply and demand are just as harsh in his story as they were for the Okies and Arkies caught in the Dust Bowl. California growers, the man reveals, print more handbills than they need hoping to attract a glut of workers. Rather than limiting the influx of laborers, they exploit them by decreasing their wages below subsistence and replacing the workers who protest. Now with his entire family dead, he was "goin' back to starve." The other migrants wonder if he is some sort of "labor fink," while Casy, who believes this man's story, can only wonder if his "truth" will be the same for the Joads.

The family stops at a gas station where they learn that the price of being poor is enduring animosity from others. But in a restaurant, the Joads find that ordinary people can show compassion and generosity as well as uphold the dignity of those who seem to have lost everything else.

Before the Joads drive thought the desert, they stop at another gas station. The attendants echo the prevailing disdain for the indigent Okies who stream into California in a procession of jalopies. "It takes a lot of nerve," says one attendant. But Tom is practical and indomitable: "Take no nerve to do something there ain't nothing else you can do." By now, Granma is dying, softly calling for her dead husband. Ma gently caresses the old woman's brow, insisting that "the family's got to get across" the desert. When they're stopped for an agricultural inspection, Ma pleads that Granma is "awful sick" and needs a doctor. This is the first scene where law enforcement officials take pity on the family. Throughout the film, land inspectors, supervisors, police and the "tin shield" deputies seem as ubiquitous and unfeeling as the dust storms the Joads sought to escape. However, in this scene, the officials allow the family to cross the desert without evacuating the truck.

In the morning, the family has their first glimpse of California. "Thar she is," says Pa. But Ma stays behind, exhausted. Granma died that night and Ma's resourcefulness at the Inspection Stop saved the family precious time. Viewers can catch an image of photographer Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*. Ma rests her hand against her face as she laments, "I was afraid they'd stop us and we wouldn't get across. The family had to get across!"

The family's next stop is at a transient Hooverville. The sign reads, "City Limit," but as the camera's eye enters the camp, one has the feeling that he has reached the end or limit of civilization. Even the campers walk in deliberate slow motion as they size up the newcomers. Tom's comment, "Sure do look none too prosperous" is the ultimate irony. For the first time, the family faces the fact that despite their own poverty, there are others even worse off than they. Starving children hover like flies as Ma prepares a stew to feed the family. The Joads are visibly disturbed by the children's faces. Despite Tom's insistence, Uncle John can't eat. "I'd still see them [the children] in the tent," he laments. Once again, Ma ensures that the family will be taken care of, but she also cares for the family of man by sharing the family's leftovers with the children. This compassion is in sharp contrast to the attitude of the land contractor and his deputy who enter the camp soliciting workers. When a worker insists that the contractor show his license, that man is accused of being an "agitator." The deputy prepares to apprehend the laborer on trumped up charges. A scuffle ensues and a woman is mistakenly shot. Tom protects the fleeing "agitator" but Casy insists on taking the rap for Tom who has already violated parole by migrating with his family. Not surprisingly, law reinforcements appear on the scene. Casy explains that his role in the fight all stemmed from the fact that he "talked back." He even holds out his hands to be cuffed. Meanwhile, the injured woman lies bleeding; her death is of little concern to the police.

The camera's eye is again purposefully maneuvered to convey the Joads' apprehensions and confusion as they enter the Keene Peach Ranch during a strike. "These are our own people," Tom notes curiously. The crowd yells "scab" at the Joads as they try to get work. But the Joads don't understand that this is the warn-

ing given by the demoralized Okie at the roadside camp. They are the victims of capitalism run amuck, when the laws of supply and demand treat human labor like a cheap commodity. Later, when the family is eating dinner, Ma explains that the high prices at the company store limit the amount of meat she could purchase for the family. At the Keene Ranch, as official warns, "Do your work and mind your own business. You'll do all right." Of course, this warning foreshadows the opposite of what really does happen. Tom can never just "mind his own business" if that requires him to be blind to injustice. Later, Tom encounters Casy and other strike leaders. Tom initially wants no part of the communal protest. But the strike leaders explain that the employers' aim is to lower the workers' pay. Since there is a ready supply of laborers and no voice for their cause, the owners can get away with it. Tom is confused as to why Casy gets involved in the plight of others. Casy reiterates the sentiments that got him arrested in the first place, "I gotta ask." The film continues to depict strikers and laborers as simple good people who "gotta ask" but never demand.

When the plotting strikers are discovered, a fight breaks out. Casy, unarmed, is killed and Tom kills Casy's attacker. Wounded, Tom returns to the family's cabin at the ranch. Ma is fearful and desperate. "We're crackin' up," she laments. "They ain't no family no more now--got nothing to trust." But Tom takes heart in Casy's example. He tells Ma that Casy "was like a lantern, he helped me see." The Joads leave Keene, hiding Tom under some blankets.

"Like a lantern," a light guides the Joads to the Wheatpatch Camp under the auspices of the Agricultural Department. The contrast between this camp and the Joads' previous experiences shocks them. The director, an FDR look-a-like, was modeled after Tom Collins, the director of the government-run Weedpatch camp in California. (Steinbeck traveled with Collins and dedicated the novel to him. Ford used Collins as a technical advisor for the film.) It is here that the Joads encounter decency for the first time. "Licensed agents" employ the workers; elected members run the camp; the community even hosts dances. Best of all, the laborers are insulated from arbitrary law enforcement. "Who runs this place?" Tom asks incredulously. "The government," is the director's reply. When Tom wonders why "there aren't more camps like this one?", the director is evasive, "You'll have to find that out for yourself."

At the government camp, the Joads learn the values of collectivism within the context of government provision. Unlike the community of capitalists at the Keene Ranch, the "fellas runnin' the camp are just fellas." The government provides, but the people produce. This is populism, not socialism. Yet Tom is always hearing about "Reds." "What is these Reds anyway?" he asks. In the film, Tom's question is dismissed. At Wheatpatch, the community bands together in work and in entertainment. Students should note Tom's first act on behalf of the community--he turns off a running faucet. Later, when local growers plot to disrupt a dance, Tom and the other campers cleverly diffuse the situation while the authorities can only look at their watches wondering why the anticipated riot never materializes.

Unfortunately, the incident at the Keene Ranch follows Tom to the government camp and he must leave the family. In a powerful soliloquy, he tells Ma that he has to "find out what it is that's wrong." He thinks about Casy, "what he said--what he done--how he died." Tom reflects upon what Charles Shindo calls, the "migrant worker solidarity" when he says to Ma, "A fella aint got a soul of his

own. It's just one big soul." The sound of a faint train whistle signals his impending flight and Tom goes, assuring Ma that he "will be everywhere." Students should also note yet another *Migrant Mother* pose as Ma watches her son leave.

The final scene in the film follows the family en route once more. Ma continues to hold the family together by explaining that unlike a man, a "woman flows like a stream." More significantly, Ma offers the ultimate optimism in the name of "the people." "We've sure taken a beatin [but] we keep a comin. We're the people that live. . . . We'll go on forever. . . ." And it would seem that they do continue the legacy of the migrants following the road to work and redemption.

Refugee camp near Holtville
Dorthea Lange, 1937
Library of Congress

Time Line

1930 Eastern states experience unusually low rainfall throughout the spring and summer.

1931 Drought conditions move to the Great Plains region.

1932–37 Dust Storms hit the Southern Great Plains, severely affecting Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act—AAA passed. Reductions in production and acreage contribute to evictions of tenants. "Black Blizzards" or dust storms sighted from Texas to Canada.

1934 More than 300 million tons of topsoil blown away in dust storms in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Colorado. Effects seen as far east as New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Record heat waves in mid-west result in thousands of deaths. Large migrations result.

1935 Forty spring dust storms give rise to the name "Dust Bowl" for areas suffering from drought, erosion, and blowing dirt and sand.

1936 Sixty-eight dust storms recorded.
United States v. Butler strikes down AAA.
Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act passed.
Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* series appears.
John Steinbeck publishes *In Dubious Battle* and *Harvest Gypsies* chronicling the plight of migrants.
Triple A Plowed Under "Living Newspaper" first produced.
Pare Lorentz produces *The Plow That Broke The Plains*.

1937 Seventy-two dust storms recorded, the worst in May, June and October.
Height of mass migrations.

1938 Sixty-one dust storms recorded.
Second AAA (Federal Crop Insurance) adopted.

1939 John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* published.

1940 John Ford's film *The Grapes of Wrath* is released.
Steinbeck receives a Pulitzer Prize and Ford receives an Oscar.
House Hearings: Select Committee to Investigate Migration of Destitute Citizens begins.

General Questions for Film Viewing

1. What are some of the examples the film uses to communicate the values of family and of community?

2. How does Ma Joad keep her family together? How does she care for the "family of man"?

3. How does the film express hope, despite despair?

4. How does the film reconcile American values of rugged individualism with collective strength?

5. How is visual or dramatic irony used in this film?

6. What are some of the examples used in the film to portray the following?
   - Labor unions / organization vs. business
   - Women and men
   - Local, state, national government
   - Law enforcement

7. How does the director use the following film techniques?
   - Shadows and silhouetted lighting
   - Tight camera shots
   - Music and other sound effects
   - Special effects
   - Absence of dialogue
   - Reactive shots or reactive characters

   Comment on their effects using specific illustrations.

8. Is the film a historical record of the Depression era or a romanticized "docudrama"?

LESSON FOUR: THE NEW DEAL'S FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

A. STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- To acquaint students with the New Deal's Federal Theatre Project (FTP) and the rationale for its creation.
- To identify social, economic, and political issues which were the focus of Living Newspaper productions of the FTP.
- To see how the arts can inform people about historical issues and events.
- To debate the government's role in supporting the arts.
- To analyze primary source material regarding the relationship between art and propaganda.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Activity in the arts was one aspect of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Established in April 1935 and directed by Harry Hopkins, its purpose was to provide socially useful work for the unemployed. WPA programs included the construction of public buildings such as schools, hospitals and courthouses; highways; recreational facilities such as athletic fields and parks and playgrounds; and conservation facilities such as fish hatcheries and bird sanctuaries.

In addition four WPA arts projects ("Federal One") were established. "Federal One" not only provided work for artists, writers, musicians, and actors but nurtured young men and women who were embarking on a career in the arts during the Great Depression. Writers and artists such as Ralph Ellison and Jackson Pollock were among the many who were able to develop their talents during a critical period in their professional lives. The Federal Writer's Project (FWP) employed writers to produce a variety of publications. The FWP's most famous effort was a series of guidebooks for states, cities, and localities such as Death Valley. The Federal Music Project (FMP) provided jobs for thousands of musicians who performed for millions during the lifetime of the project. The Federal Art Project (FAP) had painters and sculptors create works of art and teach studio and art history classes. The Federal Theatre Project (FTP), directed by Hallie Flanagan, was created according to Hopkins as a "free, adult, uncensored" federal theater. In addition to theater productions the FTP also established radio units, dance and vaudeville and circus productions, as well as marionette and children's theater companies. Reflecting the times, "Negro Units" were established in several cities.

The FTP was controversial. Its supporters hailed it as a wonderful experiment while critics saw it as "boondoggling", a heavy handed propaganda effort for the New Deal. Mired in controversy, Hallie Flanagan came to the defense of the project declaring in an essay, "Democracy and the Drama," that the plays produced by

the FTP ". . . represent the new frontier in America, a frontier against disease, dirt, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and despair. . . ."

Profound changes in the role of the Federal government wrought by the New Deal concerned many Americans. Critics felt fundamental values were being eroded by increased government involvement in all facets of American life. At the same time events in Europe and Asia suggested that fascism and communism presented serious threats to America. Hitler's rise to power in Germany, Mussolini's dominance of Italy, Japan's war with China, and the continued dominance of communism in the Soviet Union caused many Americans to fear un-American activities in the United States. It is within this context that the House of Representatives in May 1938 established an Un-American Activities Committee to investigate profascist organizations.

Under the direction of Chairman Martin Dies (D-Texas), the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was charged with the task of determining the "extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States." The Chairman and its conservative members turned their attention to left-wing groups, immigrant organizations, and labor unions. Building on bipartisan opposition to the New Deal, the committee began to focus its attention on the Federal Theatre Project which had become one of the New Deal's most vulnerable creations. Members of the Committee accused the FTP of advocating the spread of communist ideology through the social themes of the plays it produced. Congressman J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ), a member of the committee announced, weeks before the committee convened, "It is apparent from the startling evidence received thus far that the Federal Theatre Project not only is serving as a branch of the Communistic organization but is also one more link in the vast and unparalleled New Deal propaganda machine. . . ."

The New Deal's FTP was an easy target in part because of the public perception that arts were an unnecessary frill and questioned government expenditures for the production of plays. Playing on public concerns, members of the committee aroused popular sentiment against the FTP by charging that writers, actors, and stage hands were members of the American Communist Party. The legislation establishing the art project specifically stipulated that political affiliation could not be used to discriminate in hiring. Although Congress had the two major parties in mind when the legislation was written, the law had the unintended effect of protecting members of the Communist Party. Director Hallie Flanagan explained in her testimony that the law simply prohibited a political test in hiring. This however did not satisfy committee members who demanded to know the party affiliation of the FTP personnel. During testimony before the committee Director Flanagan quoted Christopher Marlowe. One congressman interrupted demanding to know Marlowe's political affiliation. Flanagan's explanation that Marlowe was one of England's greatest dramatists of the Shakespearean era failed to discredit the inquisitors who played on public fears.

The Living Newspaper, at the focal point of most of the controversy, was one of the more creative forms of the FTP. Each play identified a social problem and called for specific solutions. According to Brooks Atkinson, a *New York Times* drama critic,

writers were "to shake the living daylights out of a thousand books, reports, newspaper and magazine articles" to create documentaries based on current news stories. Living Newspapers were collective efforts in many ways. The project involved a staff similar to that of a large city newspaper, with editors, reporters, and copy-readers. News gathering and research were paramount. The factual material gathered by reporters and researchers was given to dramatists, directors, stage technicians, and actors who would create dramatic material for presentation to an audience. Dialogue in each of the plays often footnoted newspaper and magazine articles to lend authenticity to the script.

Actual productions also used a variety of creative techniques. Stages had aprons, ramps, runways, and different levels. Frequent scene changes meant actors often carried props on and off stage. Scrim, a translucent curtain, could be illuminated so that action could be in front of or behind it, altering the dimensions of the stage. Animated cartoons, movies, photographs, headlines, charts, and other visual effects were projected onto the scrim, various backdrops, or portions of scenery. The offstage loudspeaker, "The Voice of the Living Newspaper," provided descriptive narratives, identified characters, or conveyed a variety of sound effects.

The Federal Theatre Project provides an opportunity to see how the New Deal addressed the Great Depression. It provided employment for hundreds and it established a federal government presence in the arts. Through this promotion of artistic expression the New Deal impacted the cultural life of the Depression years and contributed significantly to changes in American life during the 1930s.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES (3 days)

The two Living Newspaper productions in this lesson, *Power* and *One-Third of a Nation*, illustrate the Federal Theatre Project's concern for social issues. These Living Newspaper productions represent examples of "the documentary impulse" with their emphasis on facts. Each identified a significant social problem, explored the issues surrounding that problem, and suggested possible solutions. *Power* focused on electrification and the ownership of public utilities while *One-Third of a Nation* dealt with the problem of housing.

Introduce the lesson by providing some background on the Federal Theatre Project and specifically, the Living Newspaper dramas. Select one or both of the plays to use in class. If both plays are used, you may wish to divide the class into two groups and have each examine a different play. Before distributing the play scripts, have students research issues on which the dramas are based. For *Power*, students should read text accounts of the Tennessee Valley Authority and **Document 8**, Roosevelt's message to Congress calling for the establishment of TVA along with notes he later wrote regarding the program. For *One-Third of a Nation* have students examine text readings and oral histories to determine the affects of the depression on people's lives, especially focusing on the affects of the continuing economic depression which stimulated the inauguration of the Second New Deal. Students should also read **Document 10**, excerpts from Roosevelt's second inaugural, his address to a Democratic Party victory dinner, and the Fireside Chat of March 9, 1937. The documents in this lesson along with text readings provide a

basis for analysis of the issues raised in each play. Questions with each of the documents may help to focus student discussion.

Distribute copies of the excerpts of the selected play(s) (**Documents 9** and **11**) for homework reading. Have students perform the play as a readers' theater. Provide "rehearsal" time if you wish for a more dramatic performance.

Depending on time for this activity, you may wish to have students perform the excerpts provided in these documents or have them select scenes to perform for the class. If students elect to perform several scenes from the provided script, have them explain the reasons for their selection of these scenes during debriefing.

Following the readers' theater, conduct a debriefing session using the following general questions as a discussion guide.

1. What is the issue the Living Newspaper dramatizes?
2. What is the point of view / interpretation of the Living Newspaper regarding the issue?
3. Based upon the knowledge you have about the issue as result of your re search and study how accurate is the production's version of the truth?

Conclude the lesson by having students read excerpts of testimonies before the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities (**Document 12**). Witnesses called before the committee included actors, administrative personnel, and the National Director of the FTP, Hallie Flanagan. Although it is difficult to do justice to testimony which covers thousands of pages, excerpts can give some idea of the criticisms levied against the FTP and the Living Newspaper dramas.

Assign students roles of the nine individuals in these excerpts of the hearings. Have each read their testimony to the class. The nine persons are (in order they appear in **Document 12**): Congressman Martin Dies (Chairman, Texas); Mr. Wallace Stark; Congressman J. Parnell Thomas (New Jersey); Miss Hazel Huffman; Congressman John Dempsey (New Mexico); Congressman Joe Starnes (Alabama); Congressman Harold G. Mosier (Ohio); Mr. Charles Walton; and Mrs. Hallie Flanagan.

Divide the remainder of the class into groups representing different newspapers reporting on the hearings. One group should represent a liberal newspaper which has enthusiastically supported FDR and New Deal legislation. Another a more conservative newspaper which has consistently spoken out against the New Deal for advocating socialism. A third represents a middle-of-the-road newspaper. Depending on class size other groups could be assigned to represent newspapers whose editorial policy favors Gerald L. K. Smith's Union Party (including many of the followers of the slain "Kingfish" Huey P. Long); or, the American Communist Party.

Assign each group three tasks: 1) write a factual news story on the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities; 2) write an editorial on the hearings; and 3) draw a political cartoon to depict the paper's editorial policy regarding the hear-

ing. Permit students to divide the three tasks within each group. Depending on class size you may wish to have students working in pairs. Post the student work in the classroom and discuss the differences in perspectives in the news articles, editorials, and cartoons.

Another option would be to create a news conference at which time all hearing participants would answer questions from reporters. Participants can be asked to respond to parts of their testimony. Committee members can be asked about their opinions and statements made. Reporters would need to prepare relevant questions and be able to follow-up with reactions to the answers.

As an overall assessment for this lesson have students write a reflective essay with a general synthesizing discussion about the role of propaganda and the government sponsorship of the arts.

D. EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

- Identify an issue from the 1930s and create and perform a Living Newspaper play. Divide the class according to various task assignments that the FTP actually used to create a Living Newspaper. Have students create a poster to advertise their play.

- Write a Living Newspaper play based on the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings on the Federal Theatre Project.

- Organize a debate on the government's sponsorship of drama and art during the New Deal such as: "Resolved: The FTP is "boondoggling" at its worst with productions merely heavy handed New Deal and communist propaganda."

- Research the controversies over federal government support for the National Endowment for the Arts and compare and or contrast with political opposition to the Works Progress Administration's "Federal One" (art, theater, music, and writers' projects).

E. RESOURCES

The following resources will assist in the development of this lesson:

Buttitta, Tony, and Barry Witham. *Uncle Sam Presents: A Memoir of the Federal Theatre, 1935-1939*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

DeRoham, Pierre (ed). *Federal Theatre Plays*. New York: Random House, 1938.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*. New York: Random House. 1938-1941. (Materials relating to *Power* are in Volume 2, and *One-Third of a Nation* are in Volume 6.)

United States Congress, Hearings. Special Committee on Un-American Activities. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938.

A Suggestion for Legislation to Create the Tennessee Valley Authority Franklin Roosevelt, April 10, 1933

TO THE CONGRESS:

The continued idleness of a great national investment in the Tennessee Valley leads me to ask the Congress for legislation necessary to enlist this project in the service of the people.

It is clear that the Muscle Shoals development is but a small part of the potential public usefulness of the entire Tennessee River. Such use, if envisioned in its entirely, transcends mere power development; it enters the wide fields of flood control, soil erosion, afforestation, elimination from agricultural use of marginal lands, and distribution and diversification of industry. In short, this power development of war days leads logically to national planning for a complete river watershed involving many States and the future lives and welfare of millions. It touches and gives life to all forms of human concerns.

I, therefore, suggest to the Congress legislation to create a Tennessee Valley Authority, a cooperation clothed with the power of Government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise. It should be charged with the broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory for the general social and economic welfare of the Nation. The Authority should also be clothed with the necessary power to carry these plans into effect. Its duty should be the rehabilitation of the Muscle Shoals development and the coordination of it with the wider plan.

Many hard lessons have taught us the human waste that results from lack of planning. Here and there a few wise cities and counties have looked ahead and planned. But our Nation has "just grown." It is time to extend planning to a wider field, in this instance comprehending in one great project many States directly concerned with the basin of one or our greatest rivers.

This in a true sense is a return to the spirit and vision of the pioneer. If we are successful here we can march on, step by step, in a like development of other great natural territorial units within our borders.

President Roosevelt's Notes Added to the Published Congressional Message

. . . Pursuant to the foregoing message, the Congress passed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933.

The Tennessee Valley Authority created by this Act was established, in the words of the document, ". . . for the purpose of maintaining and operating the properties now owned by the United States in the vicinity of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in the interest of the national defense and for agricultural and industrial development, and to improve navigation in the Tennessee River and to control the destructive flood waters in the Tennessee River and Mississippi River Basins. . . ."

The program aiming at the control and proper use of the water resources of the Tennessee River Basin began with the issuance of my Executive Order No. 6162 of June 8, 1933, starting the construction of the Cove Creek Dam (Norris Dam) on the Clinch River, the first of a system of publicly owned dams on the principal tributaries and on the Tennessee itself.

Unified operation of these storage and main-river dams is leveling off the seasonal fluctuations of the river, thereby reducing destructive floods and maintaining a channel suitable for nine-foot navigational from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Paducah, Kentucky. At the same time a valuable by-product in the form of hydroelectric power is released from the storage dams and as it passes the run-of-river plants on the Tennessee River.

. . . Erosion control and reforestation on steeper land in the Tennessee watershed are being carried forward by CCC labor from over a score of camps that have been placed under the direction of the Authority. . . .

. . . In reforestation work, 35,600,000 trees have been planted, and about 20,000,000 more are ready for planting during the winter of 1937. To further this forestry work, TVA has established three nurseries having a combined ultimate annual output of 42,000,000 young trees. Experiments looking to the improvement and use of crop-bearing trees such as honey locust, persimmon, and chestnut, in connection with erosion control and inexpensive stock-feeding practices, are well under way.

Basic in the readjustment of farm life to bring about natural storage of water on the land is the wider use of electric energy. The Congress, in adopting the TVA Act of 1933, laid down a definite policy to govern the Authority in disposing of this surplus power. To secure the widest use of this surplus power, especially in homes and on farms, Congress provided that in the sale of electricity, public agencies, States, counties, municipalities, and cooperate organizations were to be given priority.

Electric energy is being generated by the Authority at Wilson, Wheeler and Norris Dams. The energy produced is being used in the construction of new dams, operation of navigation locks, and in the operation of electric furnaces at Nitrate Plant No. 2. The surplus power is being sold at wholesale to seventeen municipalities, fifteen cooperative power associations, and nine industrial plants. A small portion is being sold directly by TVA temporarily to four rural power districts and to employees living on Government properties. . . .

The Authority's right to sell surplus power from Wilson Dam was upheld by the United States Supreme Court on February 17, 1936.

The Tennessee Valley Authority Act requires that Nitrate Plant No. 2 at Muscle Shoals be maintained in stand-by condition in event of national emergency. This is being done. At this plant experiments are being conducted with phosphorus for military purposes. . . .

The Tennessee Valley Authority has adopted a definite policy of collaboration and cooperation with the various State and local governments in the Tennessee Valley areas. This policy has been based upon the realization of the advantages of preserving and encouraging local initiative. The Authority--in its programs in the fields of water control, land conservation, utilization of surplus power, and regional planning--has been guided by desire to avoid creating a feeling of dependence upon the Federal Government by the local community. . . .

Cooperation has been particularly important in the following fields:

In plant food experimentation and development, there has been cooperation with the State land-grant colleges in the Valley and with the agricultural extensive services and county agencies.

In the local health activities, the Authority had given financial aid to county health departments where they already existed, and had stimulated the formation of such departments where there had been none.

In the field of education, the Authority had taken a leading part in the formation of the Tennessee Valley Council on Education and Public Administration which is devoted to a study of the educational problems and techniques for handling them. It had employed existing facilities of county and municipal agencies in furnishing education for the children of its employees and in the adult education of its employees. Where projects have been so located that the Authority had had to build its own schools, the facilities have been made available to the local authorities for other students.

In conservation of fish and game, it has furnished facilities to the local authorities; but has left the administration of a propagation and protective program to the local State departments and appropriate Federal bureaus.

It has made available certain of its reservoir areas for park development and has assisted in State and county planning.

By cooperation of this type with the existing educational, agricultural, conservation, public works, and planning agencies of the Tennessee Valley, the Authority has been able to prosecute its program more effectively and to move toward its goal of strengthening, rather than weakening, local institutions and initiative.

. . .The detail of the activities and accomplishments of TVA have been so fully set forth to indicate the immediate and permanent benefits which may come from the proper use of land and water based upon intelligent large-scale planning. Some of the things that have been and will be done in the Tennessee Valley can be repeated in many other regions of the United States. The Tennessee Valley development can serve as an example and as incentive for similar developments. It will be a laboratory for the Nation to learn how to make the most out of its vast resources for the lasting benefit of the average man and woman.

Source: *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, Volume 2, The Year of Crisis, 1933*. New York, Random House, 1938, 122–29.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

Understand the Meaning

1. What were the basic goals / purposes of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as identified in 1933 by FDR?

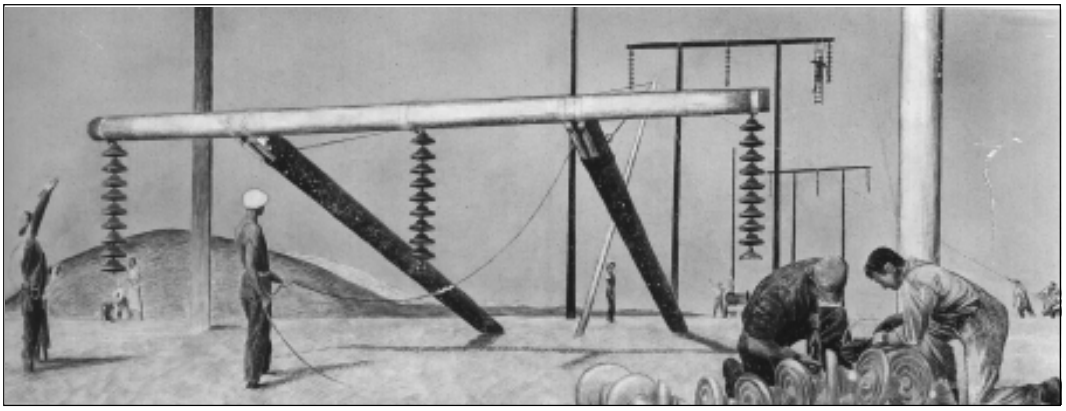
Making Inferences

1. What are the reasons this New Deal program was controversial?

2. How does the TVA address the problems of the Great Depression?

3. What problems would the TVA be addressing if there had been no Great Depression?

4. What are the ways American life changed during the 1930s as a result of the TVA?



Electrification, David Stone Martin, 1940
Fine Arts Collection, General Services Administration

POWER
A Living Newspaper
by
Arthur Arent

(First produced February 23, 1937)

Act 1, Scene 15
Prologue

(Movies of the Tennessee Valley come on scrim. They are integrated with the following LOUDSPEAKER announcements:)

LOUDSPEAKER: In the Tennessee Valley. . . . Parts of seven States, 40,000 square miles, two million people, all living in a region blighted by the misuse of land, and by the wash of small streams carrying away the fertile topsoil. In these cabins, life has changed but little since some pioneer wagon broke down a century ago, and for them this became the promised land. Occupations--when they exist at all--are primitive, a throwback to an earlier America. Here stand the results of poor land, limited diet, insufficient schooling, inadequate medical care, no plumbing, industry, agriculture or electrification! (Front *traveler curtain opens. Light comes up very slowly on FARMER and WIFE, left, while movies are still on).* Meanwhile, the entire country seeks cheap electric power, and the demand for a cost yardstick comes from every section. In the Tennessee Valley, 1933. *(Scrim goes up.)*

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. According to “Loudspeaker” what is life like in the Tennessee Valley?

2. What caused these conditions?

Act 1, Scene 15A

(FARMER seated at cut-out table on which is a lighted kerosene lamp. He is reading; WIFE is kneeling, measuring a knitted sock to his foot, carrying out the action as seen in the last movie flash.)

WIFE (fictional character): Beats me how you see to read in that light.
FARMER (fictional character): What's the matter with it?
WIFE: What's the matter with it? You're squinting down your nose like you had a bug on the end of it!
FARMER: Same light I been usin' for the last twenty years.
WIFE: Yeah, and look at you now. Them glasses are thick enough to fry eggs under if we ever got any sun in this dump!
FARMER *(quietly)*: Andy Jackson used a lamp like this, Nora.
WIFE: Then it was just too bad for Andy. Besides, they didn't have electricity in them days.
FARMER *(folding paper and putting it down)*: Maybe I better read durin' the day.
WIFE: How?
FARMER: What d'you mean, how?
WIFE: How you gonna read when you're out there plowin' from sunup to dark?
FARMER: Maybe I better quit readin'.
WIFE: That's right. Don't do nothing about it. Just give in and don't make no fuss, and everybody'll love you.
FARMER: What you want me to do, Nora? The wick's up as high as it'll go.
WIFE: Never mind the wick! How about a couple of nice little electric lights around here?
FARMER: Now, we been all over that before. And there ain't nothin' I can do about it.
WIFE: Ain't there?
FARMER: You heard what Joe Frank said. His farm's bigger'n mine. He can use more lights, and the company told him, nothin' doin'.
WIFE: So, you and Joe are gettin' up a little club to read in the daytime, eh? *(She rises)* Suppose they told you you couldn't have any air, would you stop breathin'?
FARMER: What's that got to do with it?
WIFE: Light's just as important as air.
FARMER: Sure it is, but. . .
WIFE: Don't "but" me! Why don't you go out and do somethin' about it?
FARMER: Nora, if they don't want to string lights out to my farm I can't make 'em.

(FARMER rises.)

WIFE: Who said you can't? Who says you can't go up there and raise holy blazes until they give 'em to you! Tell 'em you're an American citizen! Tell 'em you're sick and tired of lookin' at fans and heaters and vacuums and disk-washin' machines in catalogues, that you'd like to use 'em for a change! Tell 'em . . . *(She stops)* . . . What the hell do you think Andy Jackson you're always talkin' about

would do in a case like this! *(As he stands, convinced, she claps his hat on his head, and gives him a push)* No go on out and tell 'em somethin'!

(FARMER exits.)

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. How does the farmer respond to his wife's lament about the lack of electricity?

2. What is the solution the wife proposes?

3. What will electricity do for this family?

Rural Electrification Administration Co-op Office, Lafayette, Louisiana., 1939
National Archives

Act 1, Scene 15B

(*City Man and Wife*)

LOUDSPEAKER: In nearby Chattanooga.

(Lights come up on husband and wife. City dwellers arc seated at table on which is an electric lamp. He reads and she peels potatoes.)

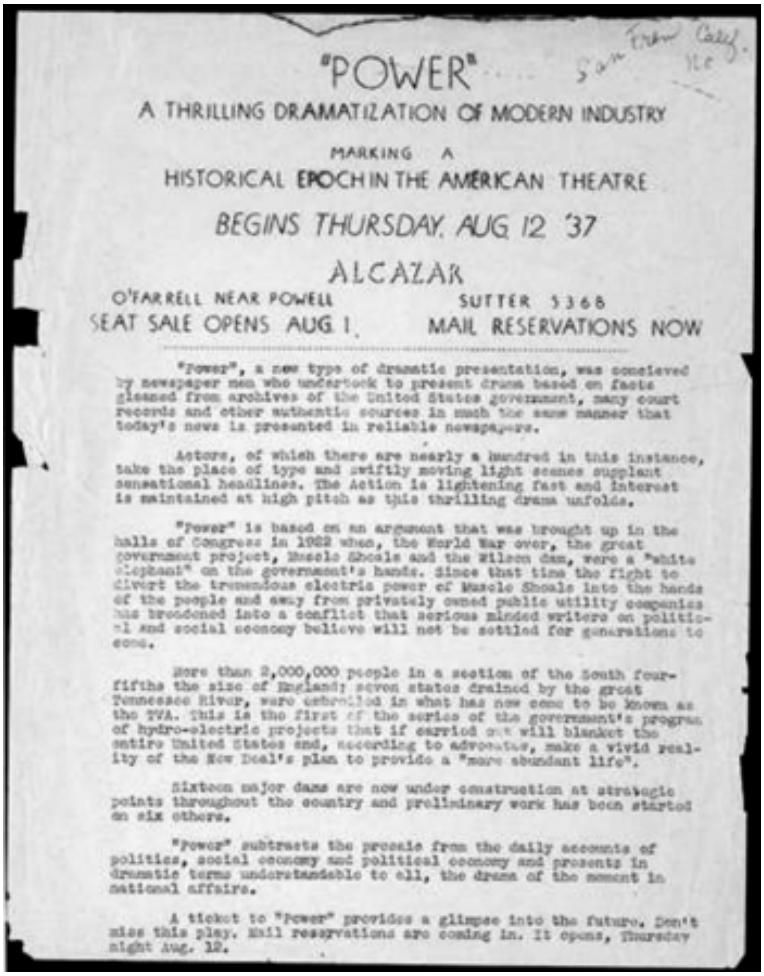
HUSBAND: Well, here it is. First of the month. (Picks up envelope from table, reads bill, emits a long whistle) Six ninety-two! Say, what do you do with the juice around here, eat it?
WIFE (flippantly): No, darling. We burn it.
HUSBAND: But good Lord, I only pay thirty-five dollars a month rent for this whole house!
WIFE: What's that got to do with it?
HUSBAND: It seems all out of proportion, one-fifth for electricity. If this keeps up I'll have to cut down my life insurance.
WIFE: That'll be nice.
HUSBAND: Of course, if I had the kind of wife who turned the lights off when she walked out of a room I wouldn't have to. (Rises, stands left of table.)
WIFE: I did that once and you almost broke your leg going back into it.
HUSBAND: Well, we've got to cut down. Our bills shouldn't be more than three dollars a month.
WIFE: That's what I say.
HUSBAND: Don't say anything, do something about it!
WIFE: All right, let's throw out the radio.
HUSBAND: How can I hear any football games if you do that? Let's stop using the vacuum.
WIFE: And me get down on my hands and knees? Not on your life!
HUSBAND: How about the washing machine? You used to send the stuff out.
WIFE: Yeah, and your shirts came back; without cuffs. Remember?
HUSBAND: Well, we've got to do something You got any ideas?
WIFE: I got one.
HUSBAND: What is it?
WIFE: Did it ever occur to you that maybe those electric companies are charging too much?
HUSBAND: Sure it did. But what can I do about it? Bump my head against the wall?
WIFE: No, but you can complain to the State Electric Commission.
HUSBAND: Look, dear. I'm just one little consumer. How can I fight a utility?
WIFE: Tell the Commission. That's what they're there for.
HUSBAND: Why, they won't even listen to me.
WIFE (rises): Make 'em. Tell 'em that your taxes are paying their salaries. Tell 'em that that's what they're there for, to regulate things. Tell 'em you're sick and tired of making dividends for somebody else and it's about time the little fellow got a look-in some place. And tell 'em . . . (*She stops*) . . . tell 'em you'll be damned if you'll give up listening to those football games on Saturday afternoon! (*She thrusts hat at him*) Now get goin'! (*He does.*)

[Blackout]

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. Specifically, what is the problem posed in this scene? Compare and contrast this scene of an urban-dwelling husband and wife with the farm couple in the previous scene.

2. How is the situation for the city couple different from the farm couple? Compare the solution proposed by the wife with that of the wife in the previous scene.



"POWER"

A THRILLING DRAMATIZATION OF MODERN INDUSTRY

MARKING A

HISTORICAL EPOCH IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE

BEGINS THURSDAY, AUG 12 '37

ALCAZAR

O'FARRELL NEAR POWELL SUTTER 5368

SEAT SALE OPENS AUG 1. MAIL RESERVATIONS NOW

"Power", a new type of dramatic presentation, was conceived by newspaper men who undertook to present drama based on facts gleaned from archives of the United States government, many court records and other authentic sources in much the same manner that today's news is presented in reliable newspapers.

Actors, of which there are nearly a hundred in this instance, take the place of type and swiftly moving light scenes supplant sensational headlines. The Action is lightening fast and interest is maintained at high pitch as this thrilling drama unfolds.

"Power" is based on an argument that was brought up in the halls of Congress in 1922 when, the World War over, the great government project, Muscle Shoals and the Wilson dam, were a "white elephant" on the government's hands. Since that time the fight to divert the tremendous electric power of Muscle Shoals into the hands of the people and away from privately owned public utility companies has broadened into a conflict that serious minded writers on political and social economy believe will not be settled for generations to come.

More than 2,000,000 people in a section of the South four-fifths the size of England; seven states drained by the great Tennessee River, were enrolled in what has now come to be known as the TVA. This is the first of the series of the government's program of hydro-electric projects that if carried out will blanket the entire United States and, according to advocates, make a vivid reality of the New Deal's plan to provide a "more abundant life".

Sixteen major dams are now under construction at strategic points throughout the country and preliminary work has been started on six others.

"Power" subtracts the prosaic from the daily accounts of politics, social economy and political economy and presents in dramatic terms understandable to all, the drama of the moment in national affairs.

A ticket to "Power" provides a glimpse into the future. Don't miss this play. Mail reservations are coming in. It opens, Thursday night Aug. 12.

Library of Congress, 1937

Act 1, Scene 15C

(*Farmer and Electric Company Manager*)

(*Lights come up on desk. MANAGER of Electric Company is seated at desk. FARMER, left of desk, stands.*)

FARMER: My God, I've got to have lights, I tell you!
MANAGER: Certainly, Mr. Parker. You can have all the lights you want. All you've got to do is pay for the cost of poles and wires.
FARMER: But I haven't got four hundred dollars! And my farm's mortgaged up to the hilt already. (*Desperately*) Can't you see? If I could only get juice I could get me an electric churn and make enough money to pay for the poles!
MANAGER: I'm sorry, Mr. Parker, but that's the way we operate. I'm afraid I can't do a thing for you.
FARMER: And I got to go on livin' the rest of my life with a kerosene lamp and a hand churn like my grandfather did when he came here?
MANAGER: Until you can raise the cost of the equipment.
FARMER (*desperately*): Isn't there anybody else I can talk to?
MANAGER: I'm the manager here. There's nobody else.
FARMER: Isn't there any other company I can go to?
MANAGER: We're the only one in this part of the State.
FARMER: Then when you turn me down I'm finished?
MANAGER: That's right. (*A pause.*)
FARMER: By God, the Government ought to do something about this!

[Blackout]

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. This scene is a follow-up to Scene 15A. The farmer confronts the electric company manager.

2. What must the farmer do to get electricity?

3. How is the electric company manager portrayed in this scene?

Act 1, Scene 15D

(*City Man and Commissioner*)

(*Lights up on desk. COMMISSIONER seated, MAN standing, right of desk.*)

Mr. Commissioner, my electric bills are too high!
COMMISSIONER: Have you had your meter tested?
MAN: Yes, I've had it tested twice. The meter's all right, but the bills are too high just the same.
COMMISSIONER: Mr. Clark, you're not paying one cent more for your electricity than anybody else.
MAN: I know that! That's what the trouble is, we're all paying too much!
COMMISSIONER: Mr. Clark, the company that sells you is working on a margin of seven to eight per cent. We consider that a fair profit. And so will you, if you're a business man.
MAN: Look, Mr. Commissioner. I'm not asking you to argue with me on behalf of the utilities. I am a taxpayer! I'm paying your salary! I want you to go and argue with them! What's the Commission for, if it's not to help guys like me?
COMMISSIONER: Mr. Clark, the law permits any private enterprise to make a fair return on its investment.
MAN: It does, eh?
COMMISSIONER: And the law permits any company to charge any rate so long as that fair profit is maintained.
MAN: It does, eh? Well, tell me this: If laws like that are made for utilities, why aren't laws made to help people like me?

(*General lighting on entire stage reveals FARMER, his WIFE, and CITY WIFE in their former positions.*)

FARMER'S WIFE: And me!
CITY WIFE: And me!
FARMER: And me!

[Blackout]

STUDENT QUESTIONS

This scene is a follow-up to Scene 15B. A city man confronts the commissioner.

1. Why is the man complaining to the public service commissioner?

2. What is the commissioner's position? Does the scene portray the commissioner as an "agent" of the utility company?

3. According to the dialogue in this scene, what is the reason for high electric rates?

Act 1, Scene 15E

(*Parade and TVA Song*)

LOUDSPEAKER: May 18th, 1933. The United States Government answers.

(*Lights pick up CLERK of Senate.*)

CLERK (*reads*): The Tennessee Valley Authority is created for the purpose of: one, flood control of the Tennessee River Basin; two, elimination of soil erosion, and three, the social and economic rehabilitation of the swampland and hill people of this district; four, the generation and distribution of cheap electric power and the establishment of a cost yardstick. (*As the CLERK reaches the words "the social and economic rehabilitation" orchestra plays the TVA song very softly. When the CLERK reaches the words "cost yardstick" lights fade on him. A motion picture of TVA activities and water flowing over the Morris Dam appears on the scrim, and through the scrim and on projection curtain upstage. A parade of men and women comes on stage behind scrim, singing the TVA song. Many of them carry lanterns. Red, yellow and amber side lights pick up the parade. They circle the stage and continue the song until act curtain falls, which comes down on movie of second large waterfall.*)

THE TVA SONG

My name is William Edwards,
I live down Cove Creek Way;
I'm working on the project
They call the TVA.

The Government begun it
When I was but a child,
And now they are in earnest
And Tennessee's gone wild.
All up and down the valley
They heard the glad alarm;
The Government means business—
It's working like a charm.
Oh, see them boys a-comin',
Their Government they trust,
Just hear their hammers ringin',
They'll build that dam or bust!

For things are surely movin',
Down here in Tennessee;
Good times for all the Valley,
For Sally and for me.

—Curtain—Movie continues on front curtain until end of film.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the "cost yardstick"?

2. How does the TVA song promote the government program in the Tennessee Valley?

Act 2, Scene 6 (Finale)

CHARACTERS

Pairs of characters for and against TVA
- TWO MEN ON STREET
- MAN ON SOAP BOX
- BROKER (MAN)
- STOCKHOLDER (WOMAN)
- DISTRICT COURT JUDGE
- FIRST BUSINESS MAN
- SECOND MAN
- SECOND BUSINESS MAN
- HOUSEWIFE
- SECOND HOUSEWIFE
- COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE
- CROWD OF MEN
- FARMER
- WORKER

LOUDSPEAKER

Supreme Court
- VOICE OF CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES
- Counsel for Stockholders
  - FORNEY JOHNSTON
  - JAMES M. BECK
- VOICE OF JUSTICE MC REYNOLDS
- JOHN LORD O'BRIAN, Counsel for Gov't. Flashbacks of previous scenes
- FARMER
- ELECTRIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER
- CITY MANAGER
- PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

The Public
- FARMER
- BUSINESS MAN
- CITY DWELLER
- CONSUMER-AT LARGE

TVA
- MAN
- GOVERNOR BIB GRAVES, of Alabama
- GOVERNOR HILL MC ALISTER, of Tennessee
- SENATOR GEORGE W. NORRIS, of Nebraska
- PARADERS
  - FIRST MAN
  - SECOND MAN
  - FIRST WOMAN
  - SECOND WOMAN
  - THIRD MAN
  - THIRD WOMAN

FOURTH MAN
FIFTH MAN
FOURTH WOMAN
SIXTH MAN
FIFTH WOMAN
SIXTH WOMAN
SEVENTH MAN
EIGHTH MAN
NINTH MAN
ANOTHER MAN
JAMES LAWRENCE FLY, Solicitor
REPRESENTATIVE JOHN E. RANKIN, Mississippi
OTHER PARADERS

(Lights come up on two MEN *walking across stage, left to right. As these* MEN *cross stage, lights hit various groups one after another, showing similar scenes depicting the tremendous interest and argument the TVA question has provoked all over the country. The groups include* MAN ON STREET, EXECUTIVE, MAN ON A SOAP BOX, *a* BROKER *and a* STOCKHOLDER, *two* BUSINESS MEN, JUDGES *rendering the early decisions on TVA. The lines are flung out staccato.)*

MAN ON STREET: What do I care? If it cuts my bills I'm for it!
EXECUTIVE: It's un-American, that's what it is!
STOCKHOLDER [Woman]: What about my stocks? What about my dividends?
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE: Unconstitutional!
FIRST BUSINESS MAN: This means the death sentence for private industry!
MAN ON SOAP BOX: We've got to have a yardstick!

(*A group of* WORKING MEN *and* WOMEN *straggle in.*)

SECOND BUSINESS MAN: The yardstick is unfair!
MAN ON SOAP BOX: The Government has the right!
SECOND BUSINESS MAN: The Government has no right!
MEN (*in* CROWD *ad libbing*): Un-American; it's fair; it's unfair; unconstitutional; the Government has the right; the Government has no right; constitutional; yes; no!
FARMER: We need light!
WORKER: We need power!

(*The lights dim out slowly. Single words are heard above the music: un-American! Stocks! Dividends! Unconstitutional! Yardstick! Light! Power!, etc., etc. Above this is heard the* LOUDSPEAKER)

LOUDSPEAKER: The argument grows! East and West, the man on the street, the Consumer, the stockholder, all take it up! The lower court says:

(*Light on* JUDGE *on platform, right.*)

DISTRICT COURT JUDGE: Unconstitutional!

LOUDSPEAKER: The Court of Appeals says:

(*Light on* JUDGE *on platform, left.*)

COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE: Constitutional!

(*Lights dim out on* JUDGES.)

LOUDSPEAKER: December 19, 1935, Washington, D. C. The fight to invalidate the TVA reaches the Supreme Court, in the suit brought by minority stockholders of the Alabama Power Company.

(*Rear curtain opens, disclosing Supreme Court bench, above which are nine masks representing the faces of the nine Supreme Court Judges. Lights come up on the masks.*)

VOICE OF CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES: Do you challenge the authority of the Government to sell the power?
LOUDSPEAKER: Forney Johnston, counsel for the stockholders.

(*Light on JOHNSTON on platform, left center.*)

JOHNSTON: We undoubtedly do, for non-Government purposes.
LOUDSPEAKER: James M. Beck for the stockholders.

(*Light on BECK standing on platform, right center*)

BECK: It is a scheme to peddle electricity to the largest number.
LOUDSPEAKER: Mr. Justice McReynolds
VOICE OF JUSTICE MC REYNOLDS: Does the Government maintain that it can manufacture electricity at Wilson Dam and sell it in competition with private industry all over the country?
LOUDSPEAKER: John Lord O'Brian, counsel for the Government.
O'BRIAN (O'BRIAN appears on platform, center): Shall the power which belongs to the people be wasted?

Blackout—(*Light remains on Supreme Court during the following scenes.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: The minority opinion.
VOICE OF MC REYNOLDS: The record leaves no room for doubt that the primary purpose was to put the Federal Government into the business of distributing and selling electric power through certain large districts, to expel the power companies which had long serviced them.
LOUDSPEAKER: Which had long serviced them!

(*The following staccato scenes take place downstage. In a sense they are flash-backs showing the plight of farmers not serviced by the companies and small consumers of electricity. Light up on FARMER and ELECTRIC COMPANY MANAGER, left.*)

FARMER: By God, I've got to have light, I tell you!
MANAGER: You can have all the light you want. All you've got to do is pay for the price of poles and wires.
FARMER: But my farm is mortgaged up to the hilt already! (MANAGER *just shrugs his shoulders.*)

[Blackout]

(*Light on CITY MAN and PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER, right.*)

MAN: My bills're too high.
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER: No higher than anybody else's.
MAN: But they're *all* too high.

(*COMMISSIONER just shrugs his shoulders.*)

[*Blackout]*

LOUDSPEAKER: The majority opinion, Chief Justice Hughes.
VOICE OF HUGHES: . . . Water power, the right to convert it into electric energy, and the electric energy thus produced constitute property belonging to the United States. Authority to dispose of property constitutionally acquired by the United States is expressly granted to the Congress by Section Three of Article Four of the Constitution of the United States.
LOUDSPEAKER: The Congress shall have power to dispose of, and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States, and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States. * (Constitution of the United States.)
VOICE OF HUGHES: We come then to the question of the method which has been adopted in disposing of the surplus energy generated at the Wilson Dam. That method, of course, must be an appropriate means of disposition according to the nature of the property, and it must be one adopted in the public interest as distinguished from private or personal ends.
LOUDSPEAKER: In the public interest!

(*Light up on FARMER, BUSINESSMAN, CITY DWELLER and CONSUMER-AT-LARGE lined up downstage, left to right.*)

FARMER: We raise the food you eat, millions of us. Are we the public interest?
BUSINESS MAN: There are twelve billion dollars invested in the electric industry. Are we, the stockholders, the public interest?
CITY DWELLER: There are millions of us city folks who stand to gain if rates are cut. The money saved will buy more food and clothing. Are we the public interest?
CONSUMER-AT-LARGE: If monopoly is necessary we must have a yardstick to do the work of competition and keep rates down. Are we the public interest?
LOUDSPEAKER: *Who is the public interest?*

(*The MEN turn toward Supreme Court bench as lights fade out.*)

VOICE OF HUGHES: The question of the constitutional right of the Government to acquire or operate local or urban distribution systems is not involved.

LOUDSPEAKER: The decision!
VOICE OF HUGHES: The pronouncements, policies and program of the Tennessee Valley Authority and its directors did not give rise to a justifiable controversy. . . .
(*Lights go out on Supreme Court bench. Rear curtain closes. MAN rushes upon stage, center.*)

MAN: TVA has won!

(*A crowd of people comes on from all entrances as red, blue, yellow and amber side-lights light up entire stage. An impromptu parade is started. They throw streamers and confetti and general carnival spirit prevails. Over the noise is heard*:)

LOUDSPEAKER: Governor Bibb Graves of Alabama. (Lights *on platform, up center.*)

Scene from *Power*
National Archives, 1937

GOVERNOR GRAVES: It was a great victory for the Government. It will enable America to compete more successfully in world markets!

(*Light on platform goes out.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Senator George W. Norris.

(*Light up on NORRIS, on platform.*)

SENATOR NORRIS: It seems to me that this was the only logical conclusion that unbiased minds could reach.

(*Light out on platform.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Governor Hill McAlister of Tennessee.

(*Light on platform.*)

GOVERNOR MC ALISTER: This is the first break we've got. As Governor I am gratified at the decision, since it means so much to Tennessee. I have always been a backer of TVA and this ruling settles the whole business.

(*Light covering platform goes out. Between the foregoing speeches the paraders continue.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Bulletin—October 13th, 1936. . . . Charging coercion and conspiracy, the West Tennessee Power and Light Company today asks the United States District Court for an injunction to prevent the PWA from granting a loan to the town of Jackson City to construct a distribution system for the handling of TVA power.

(*The paraders, who have come to a stop, regard each other in consternation. Lights slowly dim to half light, and blue side-lights come on from left and right. As following characters speak, they step down front and are picked up by front spotlights.*)

FIRST MAN: But the Supreme Court decision-

SECOND MAN: -didn't settle this at all!
FIRST WOMAN: Water power-
SECOND WOMAN: -the right to convert it into electric energy-
THIRD MAN: -and the electric energy thus produced-
THIRD WOMAN: -constitute property-
FOURTH MAN: -belonging to the United States!
FIFTH MAN: Authority to dispose of property-
FOURTH WOMAN: -constitutionally acquired-
SIXTH MAN: -by the United States-
FIFTH WOMAN: -is expressly granted-
SIXTH WOMAN: -to the Congress-
SEVENTH MAN: -Section Three-
SIXTH WOMAN: -Article Four-
EIGHTH MAN: -of the Constitution of the United States!

(*MAN steps out from group.*)

NINTH MAN: Yeah! Listen!

LOUDSPEAKER: December 22nd, 1936. . . . United States District Judge John J. Gore signs a decree restraining the TVA from constructing new transmission lines and substations, and from servicing, new power customers.

(*The people brush the confetti from their clothes, and start walking around slowly, dejectedly. During this action all lights except the blue side-lights dim slowly out.*)

LOUDSPEAKER (*continuing*): Thus nineteen utility companies put a temporary blight on the hopes of the people of the Tennessee Valley. The injunction means immediate dismissal to six hundred and fifty workers in TVA, the paralyzing of an amazing social program. People awaiting the coming of cheap power must wait longer and longer while lawyers and courts untangle constitutional questions. But the people of the Valley decide to fight. . . .

(*Lights come up on a group of MEN and WOMEN, center.*)

LOUDSPEAKER (*continuing*): The Central Labor Union of Knoxville, Tennessee, adopts a resolution calling for-

(*Out of the group a MAN speaks.*)

MAN: . . . for Judge Gore's impeachment. An inferior Federal Judge has seen fit, for no apparent reason, to decide the Supreme Court was wrong.
LOUDSPEAKER: James Lawrence Fly, Solicitor for the TVA . . .
(*FLY steps out from group.*)

FLY: This is a serious blow. An appeal will be taken.
LOUDSPEAKER: Representative John E. Rankin, Mississippi.

(*RANKIN steps out from group.*)

RANKIN: We must put a stop to these abuses of judicial power.
(*The lights dim down to one-fourth. The scrim comes in, and movies of TVA activity are shown.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Again the question marches toward ultimate decision by the Supreme Court . . . (*Rear traveler curtains open and lights come up on Supreme Court*) . . . of the United States. The fundamental constitutionality of TVA will be decided. Upon it will rest the social and economic welfare of the people of the Tennessee Valley. . . (*Red, yellow, blue and amber side-lights come on to half, covering the entire group standing down stage in front of platform*) . . . and the character of future legislation for Boulder Dam and other projects through which the people seek to control their water power, to save their soil, and to obtain cheap energy.

(*All people on stage take one step forward.*)

ENSEMBLE: What will the Supreme Court do?

(*A huge question mark is projected on to the scrim as the Curtain falls. The question mark remains on house curtain until house lights are brought up.*)

Finis

Note: The foregoing finale is subject to change when the TVA issue is finally decided by the United States Supreme Court.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the arguments for and against TVA?

2. How do the flashbacks to the farm and city dwellers counter the statements of Mr. Justice McReynolds?

3. Answer the question posed by the "Loudspeaker," Who is the public interest?

4. What position does *Power* take regarding the desirability of the TVA?

5. What would a critic of the New Deal say about the play's propaganda content? Why?

Source: Pierre de Rohan, ed. *Federal Theatre Plays* . New York: Da Capo Press, 1973, 1–91.

Roosevelt's Second Inaugural Address
January 20, 1937

When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision and to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless, and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need--the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered. For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

. . . Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold our the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate States, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday. . . .

In fact, in these last four years, we have made the exercise of all power more democratic; for we have begun to bring private autocratic powers into their proper subordination to the public's government. The legend that they were invincible--above and beyond the processes of democracy--has been shattered. They have been challenged and beaten.

Our progress out of the depression is obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job with second-hand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations. . . .

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For "each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth."

. . . . Have we reached the goal of our vision of the fourth day of March 1933? Have we found our happy valley?

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of

natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens--a substantial part of its whole population--who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint if for you in hope and because the Nation, seeing the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful, law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our Nation, we will not listen to Comfort, Opportunism, and Timidity. We will carry on. . . .

Source: *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, 1937 Volume 6, The Constitution Prevails*. New York, Random House, 1941, 1–5.

If We Would make Democracy Succeed, I Say We Must Act--NOW!
Roosevelt's Address at the Democratic Victory Dinner
March 4, 1937

On this fourth of March 1937, in millions of homes, the thought of American families are reverting to the March 4 of another year. That day in 1933 represented the death of one era and the birth of another.

At that time we faced and met a grave national crisis. Now we face another crisis--of a different kind but fundamentally even more grave than that of four years ago. Tonight I want to begin with you a discussion of that crisis. I shall continue that discussion on Tuesday night in a nation-wide broadcast and thereafter, from time to time, as may be necessary. For I propose to follow my custom of speaking frankly to the Nation concerning our common problems. . . .

It will take courage to let our minds be bold and find the ways to meet the needs of the Nation. But for our Party, now as always, the counsel of courage is the counsel of wisdom.

If we do not have the courage to lead the American people where they want to go, someone else will.

Here is one-third of a Nation ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed--NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of farmers wondering whether next year's prices will meet their mortgage interest--NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of men and women laboring for long hours in factories in inadequate pay--NOW!

Here are thousands upon thousands of children who should be at school, working in mines and mills--NOW!

Here are strikes more far-reaching than we have ever known, costing millions of dollars--NOW!

Here are Spring floods threatening to roll again down our river valleys--NOW!

Here is the Dust Bowl beginning to blow again--NOW!

If we would keep faith with those who had faith in us, if we would make democracy succeed, I say we must act--NOW!

Source: *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, 1937 Volume 6, The Constitution Prevails*. New York, Random House, 1941, 113–21.

"Fireside Chat"
March 9, 1937

The national address Roosevelt referred to in his Victory Dinner speech was delivered as a "fireside chat" on March 9. The president's remarks were directed toward the Supreme Court in a speech to build public support for his court reform ("Court Packing") proposal he had proposed in February. In the speech, the president again made reference to one-third of the nation living in poverty.

. . . Four years ago action did not come until the eleventh hour. It was almost too late.

If we learned anything from the depression we will not allow ourselves to run around in new circles of futile discussion and debate, always postponing the day of decision.

The American people have learned from the depression. For in the last three national elections an overwhelming majority of them voted a mandate that the Congress and the President begin the task of providing the protection--not after long years of debate, but now.

The Courts, however, have cast doubts on the ability of the elected Congress to protect us against catastrophe by meeting squarely our modern social and economic conditions.

We are at a crisis in our ability to proceed with that protection. It is a quiet crisis. There are no lines of depositors outside closed banks. But to the far-sighted it is far-reaching in its possibilities of injury to America.

I want to talk with you very simply about the need for present action in this crisis--the need to meet the unanswered challenge on one-third of a nation ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed. . . .

Source: *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt, 1937 Volume 6, The Constitution Prevails*. New York, Random House, 1941, 122–23.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

In these three documents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt repeats a phrase which becomes the heme for a Living Newspaper FTP production.

Understanding the Meaning

1. What is President Roosevelt's evaluation of New Deal measures to end the depression during his first term?

2. According to the president, what are the task that lay ahead?

3. What is the current crisis as outlined in Roosevelt's Victory Dinner speech? Why does he consider this crisis more grave than those previously faced?

Making Inferences

1. In the fireside chat, how does Roosevelt infer that the Supreme Court is working contrary to the wishes of the people?

2. Were the remarks in these addresses regarding one-third of the nation living in poverty political rhetoric or a valid reflection of FDR's concerns? Support your answer with evidence drawn from historical evaluations of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

One-Third of a Nation
A Living Newspaper
by
Arthur Arent

(First produced January 17, 1938)

Act 1, Scene 4C (*What They Got*)

(Lights go on in lower center cubicle, on a Jewish family—FATHER, MOTHER. *A crib, music.*)

MOTHER: He hasn't moved for a long time now.
FATHER: It's good. Sleep is good.
MOTHER: How white his face is. (*Leans over crib*) Such a good baby. Never cries.
FATHER: With a mother like you he should cry?
MOTHER: Max—I'm afraid. . . . (*Suddenly*) Where is the doctor? You said he was coming right away.
FATHER: Soon. He'll be here soon.
MOTHER: Well, where is he? Why isn't he here now? How many times—
FATHER: Maybe we should send him to the hospital?
MOTHER: Hospital? Do you want to kill him?
FATHER: Maybe it's better there. In the hospital you can get a doctor right away.
MOTHER (*at crib, suddenly*): Look, Max. . . He can't breathe! . . . Where is the doctor? Where is he?
FATHER (*sits down, wearily*): He's coming.
MOTHER: Coming! Coming! When is he coming? When it's too late?
FATHER: He's upstairs.
MOTHER: Upstairs! So go up and get him!
FATHER: Other people are sick.
MOTHER: Other people! He's worrying about other people—when your own baby is . . . (*As he leans forward wearily in his chair*) Max! What's the matter with you? (*He just shakes his head, tired. She, desperately, looking from the FATHER to the BABY*) Where is the doctor? Where is he? Max! (*He opens his eyes and looks at her.*)
FATHER (*in a dazed manner*): Sick . . . everybody sick . . . the baby . . . the whole house . . . (*He gasps and sinks down. MOTHER turns, sees him fall—screams.*)

[Blackout]

(*Lights up on third floor landing PATIENT [woman], held up by her daughter is being examined by DOCTOR, with NURSE standing by. DOCTOR is giving symptoms.*)

DOCTOR: Cholera! (*Tips face back*) Usual cyanotic color of skin . . . (*picks up hand*) fingernails . . . (*looks into mouth*) and mucous membrane. (*As he releases her hand*) Eyes sunken . . .
NURSE: Pulse . . .
DOCTOR (*after holding wrist a few counts*): Rapid and weak.
NURSE: Respiration . . .

[*Blackout]*

(*Lights up in right cubicle. BOY on bed, DOCTOR at head of bed, bent over, head against chest. FATHER at foot of bed. DOCTOR looks up.)*

DOCTOR: Respiration rapid and irregular. Heart feeble. (*PATIENT groans and turns toward side of bed*) Bring the pan. (*The MOTHER brings a pan, and kneels by the side of bed. DOCTOR helps BOY to raise up slightly, and holds his head over the pan. The BOY retches. Lights dim out. Light comes up in the lower center cubicle. JEWISH FATHER is still in a state of collapse. DOCTOR is examining him. JEWISH MOTHER is standing by.*)

MOTHER: Max. My husband . . .

DOCTOR (*examining MAN—head, fingernails, mouth, pulse, heart*): Usual cyanotic color. Eyes sunken. Pulse rapid and weak. I'm afraid it's cholera. When was he taken sick?

MOTHER: This morning he didn't feel so good.

DOCTOR: Cholera can run its course in a few hours. Put him to bed. (*DOCTOR crosses to BABY. Abruptly*) This baby is dead. (*MOTHER screams.*)

[Blackout]

(*Lights come up sharply on the right area of third-floor landing, catching two ORDERLIES coming out of a doorway carrying a stretcher. NURSE stands center of landing, reading chart.*)

NURSE: Ground floor. Cholera. Baby dead. Male adult. Advanced stages. (*To ORDERLIES*) You're late! I've got twenty cases to go out immediately! (*SECOND ORDERLY drops front end of stretcher to the floor.*)

SECOND ORDERLY: Wait a minute.

FIRST ORDERLY: What's the matter?

SECOND ORDERLY: How many does this make for you?

FIRST ORDERLY: I ain't counted.

SECOND ORDERLY: Me neither. Bill, I'm scared.

FIRST ORDERLY: Scared of your luck?

SECOND ORDERLY: Sure I'm scared—scared I'll catch it. Scared I'll—

(*An OLD EMACIATED MAN comes out of the door next to the stairs, third landing, and crosses with jerky, painful movements to the NURSE He holds up the fingers of his hands, and slowly, with effort, moves them in jerky painful movements.*)

MAN: I can't move my hands. Look! Where's the doctor?

NURSE: He's busy. Go back to your room. You're sick.

MAN (*turning to the SECOND ORDERLY, who is staring at him*) Doctor!

SECOND ORDERLY: Get away!

MAN: I can't move my hands.

SECOND ORDERLY: For God's sake, let's get out of here! (*He rushes off. Dim lights come up on entire stage. MAN comes out of alley, left, and collapses on top of three-step. DOCTOR crosses to him. TWO NEWSPAPER REPORTERS enter.*)

FIRST NEWSPAPER REPORTER: Say, Doc, what's this I hear about a cholera epidemic.

DOCTOR: Say, who are you, anyway?

FIRST NEWSPAPER REPORTER: I'm from the *Post*.

SECOND NEWSPAPER REPORTER: The *Herald*.

DOCTOR (*turns away from the OLD MAN, calls to FIRST ORDERLY, who comes down stairs*): Get back to the hospital and tell them to send men, sedan chairs, stretch-

ers, baskets, anything! This whole house is infected! (*As the ORDERLY stands there looking at him*) Well, don't stand there! Go on! Hurry! It's cholera! Cholera!

SECOND NEWSPAPER REPORTER: But, good Lord, everybody says there's no such thing as cholera in New York!

DOCTOR: Everybody! Who's everybody? It's cholera, I'm telling you! Over two thousand have died of it already. But the good people who make a living out of these tenements are trying to hush it up.

FIRST NEWSPAPER REPORTER: Well, my paper won't. We'll spread it all over . .

DOCTOR: Oh, no, you won't, you're afraid! You're afraid of telling the truth! Afraid to mention that no cases have been reported outside the slums! Go on, print it, I dare you! I dare you!

[Blackout]

LOUDSPEAKER: *New York Post*, June 12th, 1854 [—first reference to cholera for that year, under head, "The Cholera and Smallpox on Staten Island." —Ed.]—*Cholera*— Cholera epidemic spreads in Tenement District. Gerritt Forbes, Health Inspector of New York City says:

(*During the following speech, which comes over the LOUDSPEAKER, the stage is darkened save for a spot on LITTLE MAN sitting on two-step, left.*)

VOICE OF FORBES: Some cause should be assigned for the increase of deaths beyond the increase of population, and none appears as prominent as that of the crowded and filthy state in which a great portion of our population lives. We have serious cause to regret that there are in our city so many mercenary landlords who only contrive, in what manner they can, to stow the greatest number of human beings in the smallest possible space!

LOUDSPEAKER: Twenty-five hundred men, women and children lost their lives before that cholera epidemic ended. Five thousand died in the previous one. This was the third time in twenty years that New York was hit by cholera.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between slums and disease?

2. How does the drama produce an atmosphere of fear?

3. Why does the play focus on a mid-nineteenth-century cholera epidemic?

Act 1, Scene 5

(Appoint a Committee)

CHARACTERS
LITTLE MAN
LOUDSPEAKER
CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE:
N.P. Willis
Dr. James L. Little
Dr. Alexander Hadden
MAN, Announcer of statistics on disease
MAYOR
DR. JOHN H. GRISCOM, City Inspector, New York MAYOR'S COMMITTEE OF FOUR

LITTLE MAN (*looking toward LOUDSPEAKER*): What happened after that?

LOUDSPEAKER: Nothing.

MAN: You mean to say they still went on just talking about it.

LOUDSPEAKER: A Citizens' Committee was formed to investigate conditions.
(*Lights come up on house, bare and empty.*)

LITTLE MAN: Again?

LOUDSPEAKER: It consisted of Mr. N. P. Willis and Doctors James L. Little, and Alexander Hadden. . . .
(*As their names are called lights come up on the three men in each of the three cubicles, inspecting the furniture and making notes.*)

LITTLE MAN: Well, what did they do?

LOUDSPEAKER: Well, give them a chance, will you? (*LITTLE MAN starts up impatiently*) Sit down for a minute. You're getting me nervous! (*LITTLE MAN sits down. He takes out a package of cigarettes*) That's right, have a smoke (*LITTLE MAN's fingers tremble as he lights his cigarette*) You're not worried about anything, are you?

LITTLE MAN (*as though they had kept it a secret from him*) Nobody ever told me there was cholera in New York!

LOUDSPEAKER: I guess a lot of other people didn't know about it, either.

LITTLE MAN: I thought it only happened in China.

LOUDSPEAKER: Our brand was just as good as any they had!

LITTLE MAN: Well, at least there isn't any more cholera in New York today, not even in old-law tenements.

LOUDSPEAKER: That's right. No more cholera. But look what we've got instead—in old-law tenements. Report by the New York City Housing Authority. Tuberculosis!
(*Light on MAN on two-step, right.*)

MAN: From 1919 to 1934 the death rate from tuberculosis was one hundred and twenty-nine per cent higher in old-law tenements.

LOUDSPEAKER: Diptheria!

MAN: The death rate from diptheria was ninety-seven per cent higher in old-law tenements

LOUDSPEAKER: Spinal meningitis!

MAN: The death rate from spinal meningitis was one hundred and nineteen per

cent higher in old-law tenements—and the death rate from all causes was ninety-three per cent higher in old-law tenements.

[Blackout on MAN.]

LITTLE MAN: But I live in an old-law tenement! What I want to know is . . .
LOUDSPEAKER: Let's go back to 1850 again. Sssh!

(The lights come up on entire stage. MAYOR enters, right, and crosses to center, from three-step. THREE MEN wait for him on top of three-step.)

LITTLE MAN *(pointing to MAYOR)*: Who's that?
LOUDSPEAKER: That's the mayor.
DR. MADDEN: Mr. Mayor, it is a humiliating fact that no complete examples of sanitary renovation can be found in the City of New York. The "Five Points" is a district still full of perpetual fever nests and the breeding place of epidemic diseases! All told, in New York, not a district, not a street, has been redeemed from its filthiness.
DR. LITTLE: I saw, between Tenth Avenue and the Hudson River, three large manure yards, a number of fat-boiling establishments and slaughter houses. And to these may be added the dirty conditions of the streets, with gutters running with blood and filth. Scattered through the midst of these, surrounding them on all sides, are the crowded and ill-ventilated tenements of the district!
WILLIS: Mr. Mayor, I did not dream that human beings within the reach of human aid could be abandoned to the wretchedness which I saw with my own eyes. And all those horrors of want and abandonment lie almost within sound of your own voice as you pass Broadway.
LITTLE MAN: That's enough!
LOUDSPEAKER: Dr. John H. Griscom, Health Inspector of New York, presents a city-wide report on Housing

(*Enter Dr. Griscom, left, crosses to center.*)

DR. GRISCOM: Mr. Mayor, in the attempt to raise from the depressed and the poor the necessity of living crowded in single rooms, much aid cannot be found in any legal enactment. The remedy lies with the humane and philanthropic capitalists by whom houses might be erected with all the comforts and conveniences of separate rooms, running water and so forth, which would yield a fair interest on their value and make thousands of people happy. These are my findings and suggestions. (*Hands imaginary document to MAYOR. A COMMITTEE of four enter down right on two-step. MAYOR beckons to COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, who crosses to him.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: New York's first comprehensive document of housing. (*MAYOR takes imaginary document to CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE who goes back to his group. The COMMITTEE discusses the document in a sort of gibberish. Music.*)
COMMITTEE: Document—Survey—Housing—Cholera—Document—Survey—Housing—Cholera—
LOUDSPEAKER (*spacing the figures between the COMMITTEE words*): One month . . . two months . . . three months . . . four months . . . five months .
CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE (crosses *to MAYOR*): Mr. Mayor your committee

do not profess to be judges of the subject. In other words, we do not think it proper at this time to go into such a measure. We recommend that the paper be returned to its author.

(*COMMITTEE exits right. As CHAIRMAN exits he tosses paper to MAYOR. MAYOR tosses it to GRISCOM as he is leaving.*)

LITTLE MAN: Well, I'll be damned.

[Blackout]

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. How does this scene link the past (Scene 4C) to the 1930's?

2. In the 1930s what diseases replace cholera? Why?

3. In 1850 what caused epidemic diseases?

4. What solutions were proposed? What was done?

Act 2, Scene 2D
(Rent Strike)

(Music comes up.)

LOUDSPEAKER: Harlem Rent Strike: New York, October 11th, 1936. Four thousand march in fight on Harlem rent rise! East Side Rent Strike--New York, January 28th, 1933--Three hundred tenants picket landlord.

(Light on fourth floor. THREE WOMEN *come out of the three doorways and stand in hallway.)*

FIRST WOMAN *(pointing to gap in balustrade):* Three dollars a month more rent! Look at that banister!
SECOND WOMAN: It's been just like this ever since I moved in!
FIRST WOMAN: Some day somebody's going to get hurt.
THIRD WOMAN: Nobody did yet!
FIRST WOMAN: That's right—nobody did yet! So let's not do anything until someone falls and breaks his skull on the landing down there!
SECOND WOMAN: But what are we going to do?
FIRST WOMAN: Let's just sit back and pray.
THIRD, WOMAN: But what can we do about it?
FIRST WOMAN: I'm not sure, but I've got an idea. . . .

[Blackout]

(*Music comes up again.*)

LOUDSPEAKER: Bronx Rent Strike New York, January 6th, *1933.* Twenty families in Charlotte Street tenement picket landlord.
(THREE WOMEN *rush down steps and into third-floor landing as light comes up. THREE* OTHER WOMEN *meet them.)*
FOURTH WOMAN: I'm not going to pay it—that's what!
FIFTH WOMAN: Three dollars a month more, beginning October first!
FOURTH WOMAN: What about Mrs. MacNamara—where is she? *(Calling) Mr*s. MacNamara!
MRS. MACNAMARA *(stepping out of shadows of landing):* Here I am! And I just saw him!
FOURTH WOMAN: Are you going to pay it?
MRS. MACNAMARA: No!
FIFTH WOMAN: Are you going to move?
MRS. MACNAMARA: No!
FIFTH WOMAN: What *are* you going to do?
MRS. MACNAMARA: I'11 tell you what I'm going to do—I'm going to picket—and so are you—and you . . . (*To SIXTH WOMAN*) . . . and *you*, too!
SIXTH WOMAN: Picket? We Can't picket!
MRS. MACNAMARA: Why not? All you have to do is walk Up and down!
SIXTH WOMAN: With signs?
MRS. MACNAMARA: With signs and banners and everything! Sure—if the men can do it—so can we!

[Blackout]

(Music comes up and continues throughout LOUDSPEAKER'S announcement.)

LOUDSPEAKER: Brooklyn Rent Strike. January l7th, 1933. Two hundred members of the Brooklyn Tenants' League picket the landlord.
(Lights come up on FIVE or SIX WOMEN *and* TENANTS' LEAGUE ORGANIZER *in upper center cubicle.)*

ORGANIZER: Do you know how much it'll cost him to evict each tenant? $25.00!—For forty apartments it'll cost him a thousand dollars!
FOURTH WOMAN: A thousand dollars! He'll never spend it! *(There is a pause.)*
FIRST WOMAN: But is it right for us to stay here without paying rent?
ORGANIZER: Is it right for him to raise rents when there's a housing shortage? For us to be thrown out on the street? Is it?
CHORUS OF VOICES: *No!*
ORGANIZER: And so, I'm proposing right now that we, members of the Tenants' League, declare a rent strike of all the tenants in this house. That nobody move and nobody pay rent until the landlord . . .
FOURTH WOMAN: Until the landlord is willing to let us stay for the old rent!
CHORUS OF VOICES: Right!

[Blackout]

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What is a rent strike?

2. Why do the tenants think they will not be evicted if they have a rent strike?

3. What are the ideas about what is just and fair raised by the strikers? Whose side is the play on? Why?

Act 2, Scene 5
(*Looking Forward*)

CHARACTERS
LOUDSPEAKER
LITTLE MAN
LANGDON W. POST, Former Tenement House Commissioner, New York City—Voice
HELEN ALFRED, Secretary and Executive Director, National Public Housing Conference
HON. FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA, Mayor, New York City
LANDOWNER, 1800—Same as Act One, Scene Three
LANDLORD, 1938—Same as Act Two, Scene Three
MRS. BUTTONKOOPER
TENANTS OF THE HOUSE—Same as Act One, Scene One

(*After short musical interlude light picks out the* LITTLE MAN, *right. He paces, agitated, then crosses stage to center. Black scrim has again been lowered into place.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Hey! *(No answer; he continues pacing)* Hey! What are you doing?
LITTLE MAN *(without stopping):* Arithmetic.
LOUDSPEAKER: Arithmetic?
LITTLE MAN: That's right. *(He stops; leans forward, intently)* I suppose you noticed how they cut that bill down to half of what Senator Wagner originally asked for. [Original appropriation Wagner-Steagall Bill, $1,000,000,000 —Ed.]
LOUDSPEAKER: I noticed it.
LITTLE MAN: Of course, five hundred and twenty-six million is a lot of money.
LOUDSPEAKER: Of course.
LITTLE MAN: I could do a lot of things with five hundred and twenty six million.
LOUDSPEAKER: Sure you could. But where does the arithmetic come in?
LITTLE MAN: Well, I'm taking ten per cent of five hundred and twenty-six million—
LOUDSPEAKER: You mean five hundred million—twenty-six million goes for maintenance—[Wagner-Steagall Act, as passed.—Ed]
LITTLE MAN: All right, five hundred million. Ten per cent of that is fifty million—which is all that any one State can get under the terms of the bill. Right?
LOUDSPEAKER: Right.
LITTLE MAN: Well, I'm taking that fifty million and trying to fit it into the New York City housing problem.
LOUDSPEAKER: But you can't do that.
LITTLE MAN: You're telling me!
LOUDSPEAKER: That fifty million is for the whole State. According to Mayor La Guardia the most New York City can hope to get is thirty million.
LITTLE MAN: As I was saying. I'm taking that thirty million and trying to fit it into the New York City housing problem.
LOUDSPEAKER: That's fine. Before you begin, let me show you what the New York city housing problem really is—in dollars and cents. This is Langdon Post, former Tenement House Commissioner.

VOICE OF POST*:* A conservative estimate of the cost of removing the slums in New York City alone is about two billion dollars!

LOUDSPEAKER: Two billion dollars! There's your problem in arithmetic, Mr. Buttonkooper. How to make shiny million equal to two billion.

LITTLE MAN *(with paper and pencil):* That's what I'm working on.

LOUDSPEAKER: Well, what's the answer?

LITTLE MAN: A headache. *(He starts pacing again; he stops)* Do you realize that the Wagner Bill at the end of four years will have solved less than two per cent of the housing problem in New York City? [Thirty million dollars is one and one-half per cent of two billion dollars.—Ed.] Do you realize that, at that rate it will take us more than two hundred years before every slum in New York has been demolished? [At rate of thirty million dollars in four years it would require two hundred and sixty-five years for the total appropriation to equal two billion dollars.—Ed.] And by that time the ones they're building now will be slums and we'll be back just where we started**.** *(He crosses down; then, intently)* Remember, I want to live in one of those new developments! I don't give a damn about my great-great-grandchildren! *(Pause. Then, more composed) You k*now, when I heard all those Senators arguing, I got a funny feeling. I thought maybe I was crazy. Tell me, isn't there anybody else who's taken the trouble to figure this thing out? Doesn't anybody know what the score is?

LOUDSPEAKER: Most of the local housing authorities have studied the matter.

LITTLE MAN: Well, let's have it! What do they say? Let's hear *somebody* say *something.*

LOUDSPEAKER: Helen Alfred, Secretary and Executive Director of the National Public Housing Conference.

(Spot on Miss Alfred, at two-step, right.)

MISS ALFRED: The Wagner-Steagall Housing Act lays a permanent foundation for the too-long-delayed attack on dangerous and unsanitary housing conditions prevalent throughout the country. But in view of the great need for new accommodations, the sum stipulated is pitifully inadequate.

(Light out on MISS ALFRED. *Light on LA*GUARDIA, le*ft.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: The Honorable Fiorello H. La Guardia, Mayor of New York City.

LA GUARDIA: The Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill with its provisions for five hundred million dollars for rehousing the nation is a step in the right direction, but only a step—a drop in the bucket! [Speech made at Conference of Mayors, Washington, D.C. November 17, 1937.] It is therefore my intention to start a building program aside and apart from, and in addition to, the Federal program.... I have therefore requested the Board of Estimate to be prepared to act upon a resolution appropriating funds to take care of interest charges and amortization of capital investments for the construction of low-rent houses.... Remember, slums cannot be wished away, nor even legislated away. The answer is building!

(Lights out on LA GUARDIA.)

LOUDSPEAKER: Well, there you are. Feel any better?

LITTLE MAN: No. But at least I know that if I'm crazy, I'm in pretty good company! According to all those fellows we're not much better off than we were before....

LOUDSPEAKER: Less than two per cent better, according to your arithmetic.
LITTLE MAN: Well, what are we going to do about it? *(Excitedly)* Are we going to take it lying down like mice? Or, are we men? *(Starts taking off his coat.)*
LOUDSPEAKER: What are you going to do now?
LITTLE MAN: I'm going to find the guy who's responsible for these slum conditions! I'll tell him something all right, all right!
LOUDSPEAKER: Do you know who it is?
LITTLE MAN: Certainly I know who it is! What do you think I came to see this show for! *(Goes to wings, right, and leads out to center, LANDOWNER, 1800--Act One, Scene Three)* There you are! *(Pointing to tenement) Do* you see that? Look at it! You started all this when you began to speculate in land!
LANDOWNER: All I did was sit. Remember?
LITTLE MAN: Yeah, I remember. And while you sat the town grew up around you. Land values went up, and because people had to have a place to live in, *this* is the result!
LANDOWNER: Well, what are you going to do about it?
LITTLE MAN *(taken aback):* Huh?
LANDOWNER (*belligerently):* I said, what are you going to do about it? Do you think you can take the land away from my descendants and make it public property? Do you?
LITTLE MAN *(doubtfully):* No-o
LANDOWNER: That's all I wanted to know! Good-bye.
(He crosses off, right, leaving a bewildered LITTLE MAN, center.)
LOUDSPEAKER: You certainly told him something, all right, all right.
LITTLE MAN *(sheepishly):* He was too quick for me.... But there's another guy I'm going to get my hooks into and he won't get away so fast! *(Crosses to wings, left, shouting)* Hey, come on out here! *(He emerges, bringing on the* LANDLORD *of Act Two, Scene Three) You're* to blame for that! You and the high rents you collect every month! Do you know the percentage of income used for rent is higher here than in any other country on the face of the earth?
LANDLORD: Well, what are you going to do about it?
LITTLE MAN: I'll tell you what were going to do! We're going to march right up to Albany and get some emergency rent laws passed! That'll take care of you all right!
LANDLORD *(calmly):* Is that all?
LITTLE MAN (a *bit shaken by his calm):* Well—er—isn't it enough?
LANDLORD: I don't think so . . . As I recall, you fellows marched up to Albany in 1920, 1924 and 1926. In each case emergency rent laws were passed. *(Suddenly)* Are you paying any less for your apartment today than you did then?
LITTLE MAN: No.
LANDOWNER: That's all I wanted to know! Good-bye. *(He crosses off.)*
LOUDSPEAKER: You certainly got your hooks into him all right.
LITTLE MAN: Let's not talk about it.
LOUDSPEAKER: Of course those emergency rent laws did prevent rents from going still higher.
LITTLE MAN *(explosively):* Sure they did!
LOUDSPEAKER: Well, why didn't you tell him that!
LITTLE MAN: He—er—he was too quick for me.

LOUDSPEAKER: I see. Well, what next?

LITTLE MAN: Let's see now. There was the Landowner—and the Landlord—and—er— I guess that's all.

LOUDSPEAKER: Isn't there something you've forgotten, Mr. Buttonkooper?

LITTLE MAN: What is it?

LOUDSPEAKER: How about the thing that's made these slum conditions possible for the last hundred and fifty years? The thing that makes people like you and everybody else sit back and say, "Well, this is the way it always has been and this is the way it's always going to be!"

LITTLE MAN: What thing is that?

LOUDSPEAKER: It's called "inertia."

LITTLE MAN: Inertia? *(He looks puzzled.)*

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER (*rising from seat in audience):* Don't look so surprised, Angus. That's just what it is—inertia! *(Light picks her up as she comes down aisle and up on stage, left. Stands facing LITTLE MAN*) You know about these conditions and so do I and so does everybody else that lives in 'em—but we don't do anything about it!

LITTLE MAN: By golly, that's right. According to what we've seen here tonight people have been going around for a hundred years or more—taking notes, making surveys—but nobody's ever *done* anything!

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: That's it. What good are all those surveys and speeches to us when we've got to live in a place almost as bad as that twenty-four hours a day! . . . What good are all those new laws that nobody obeys when maybe those kids are going to turn out to be crooks or murderers!

LITTLE MAN: Sure! And what good are all those housing bills that take care of less than two per cent of the trouble? What good are they when we still have this? *(Points to tenement.)*

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Look at it—and don't forget that isn't only New York. It's Philadelphia and Chicago and Boston and St. Louis! According to a man named Roosevelt, it's one-third of a nation! [Second Inaugural Address, Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, Washington, D.C., January 20, 1937.] *One-third of a nation is just like that in 1938!*

LITTLE MAN *(pause):* Well, what are we going to do about it?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: I don't know yet, but it seems to me . . . (*Suddenly*) Angus, how much did you say that Wagner Bill was for?

LITTLE MAN: Five hundred and twenty-six million.

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Five hundred and twenty-six million—for four years! Why was that bill cut down from a billion dollars, Angus?

LOUDSPEAKER: Because they're trying to balance the budget.

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Balance the budget? What with? Human lives? Misery? Disease?

(A whistle is heard as)

LOUDSPEAKER: *FLASH* [News flashes of events that have occurred are used—calamities that are traceable to bad housing. The three "flashes" incorporated into the present script were used early in the run of the New York City production.—Ed.] New York, February 24th. The cracking walls in three buildings at Avenue C and 12th Street caused all the tenants to flee for their lives. A few minutes after they had abandoned their homes and possessions, two of the build-

ings collapsed. (Uneasy pause.)

LOUDSPEAKER: *FLASH,* New York, March 9th. Thirty men, women and children were forced to flee for their lives when the walls in another old-law tenement at 82 St. Marks Place began to crack. This is the second case of the kind in the last two weeks. (Uneasy pause.)

LOUDSPEAKER: *FLASH,* New York, March 12th. This afternoon at 843 St. Nicholas Avenue, Manhattan, a fire broke out in a fire-escapeless three-story tenement. Leaping from 1 second-floor window, a woman was impaled on a spiked fence. A three-year-old child was asphyxiated. Mayor La Guardia visited the scene and promised a thorough investigation.

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Say, Mister, how much was the appropriation for the Army and Navy?

LOUDSPEAKER: The appropriation for the Army and Navy for the last four years was three billion, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars.

LITTLE MAN: Three billion, one hundred and twenty-five million dollars. Why—why—that's more than enough money to clean out every slum in New York! *(Pacing excitedly)* Well, what are we going to do?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER (*interrupting*): You know what we're going to do—you and me? We're going to holler. And we're going to keep on hollering until they admit in Washington it's just as important to keep a man alive as it is to kill him!

LITTLE MAN: Will that do any good?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Sure it will. If we do it loud enough!

LITTLE MAN: You think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: They'll hear us all right if we all do it together—you and me and LaGuardia and Senator Wagner and the Housing Authorities and the Tenant Leagues and everybody who lives in a place like that! *(Pointing to tenement, TENANTS start to fill the tenement as lights come up on it.)*

LITTLE MAN *(excitedly)*: All right, all right, when do we begin?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: Right now.

LITTLE MAN: *Now?*

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: *Now! (Shouting)* We want a decent place to live in! I want a place that's clean and fit for a man and woman and kids! Can you *hear me—you in Washington or Albany or wherever you* are! G*ive me a decent place to live in! Give me a home! A home!*

LITTLE MAN: Do you think they'll hear us?

MRS. BUTTONKOOPER: And if we don't *make* them hear us you're going to have just what you've always had—slums—disease—crime—juvenile delinquency . . . and...

A VOICE: *Fire!*

(*TENANTS have begun their activities as in Act One, Scene One. Smoke starts to appear and begins to rise. Suddenly the fire sirens are heard. Pandemonium as fire scene is re-enacted. The entire scene builds to a crescendo, topped by flames, smoke, and the M*AN *cowering on the fire escape. Music.)*

LOUDSPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, this might be Boston, New York, St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia—but just let's call it, "one-third of a nation!"

Curtain

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. According to the drama, who is responsible for slum conditions? Why is "inertia" blamed? Explain.

2. How grave is the housing problem in New York City? What will it take to solve the problem?

3. What is the point of bringing up the military budget in the play?

4. What are the economics of providing housing for the lowest one-third of the nation?

5. What role, if any, should the federal government play in solving these problems? Why?

Source: Pierre de Rohan, ed. *Federal Theatre Plays*. New York: Random House, 1938, 1–121.

Special Committee on Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States House of Representatives 1938

In 1938 the United States House of Representatives established a special committee to investigate un-American activities. Under the direction of Chairman Martin Dies, Democrat from Texas, the committee focused on the "extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States." The published hearing reports cover more than 3,000 pages and include the testimony of over one hundred persons.

It is difficult to do justice to testimony that covers thousands of pages in the excerpts of the testimony of four witnesses presented below. From these excerpts you should be able to gain some idea of the criticisms leveled against the Federal Theatre Project and its director, Hallie Flanagan.

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WALLACE STARK

Wallace Stark was formerly employed by the Federal Theatre Project in New York. According to his testimony he was an "instructor in dramatics, public speaking, and screen techniques." In the following excerpt he is questioned by Chairman Martin Dies (Democrat, Texas) and Congressman J. Parnell Thomas (Republican, New Jersey).

Chairman Dies. While you were there working on that project, did you know personally of any communistic activity that took place there?
Mr. Stark. Yes. At the very beginning of Mrs. Flanagan's taking over the office, she put in a man by the name of Irving Mendell, a candymaker from Brooklyn.
Chairman Dies. Was he a Communist?
Mr. Stark. Yes, an avowed Communist.
Chairman Dies. An admitted Communist?
Mr. Stark. Yes.
Chairman Dies. What position did he occupy?
Mr. Stark. She put him in at the head of the personnel department to induct people into the Federal Theater in the different units.
Chairman Dies. Did he bring other Communists into that project?
Mr. Stark. Yes; several from the unit of dance music and drama where I taught, even the students that I taught.
Chairman Dies. What took place with reference to communistic activities after he became head of the personnel division?
Mr. Stark. He was afterward transferred to the living newspaper, which was supposed to be the unit that advocated the overthrow of the Government type of plays on the Federal Theater.
Chairman Dies. Do you charge that Mrs. Flanagan participated in communistic activity?
Mr. Stark. I have seen reports on several plays and read several plays that she has produced up in Poughkeepsie.

Mr. Thomas. Have you ever had any conversation with Mrs. Flanagan?
Mr. Stark. No. She has avoided every opportunity I have had to offer any constructive plans of mine, of my organization, which I represented, to have a veterans' project on the Federal Theater.
Chairman Dies. What organization do you represent?
Mr. Stark. I do not represent any at this time.
Chairman Dies. At one time did you represent any organization?
Mr. Stark. I was one of the deputies of the Veterans' Association.
Chairman Dies. And then you base your statement that she engaged in communistic activity upon these plays that were produced by the Federal Theater project?
Mr. Stark. I do, sir.
Chairman Dies. What were the political theories of the project?
Mr. Stark. From what I understand—
Chairman Dies. Not from what you understand, but from what you know. What do you know?
Mr. Stark. The propaganda plays, the putting on of propaganda plays.
Chairman Dies. What kind of propaganda, to do what?
Mr. Stark. To advocate communism, social-problem plays of a revolutionary nature. And I hope you can suspend Mrs. Flanagan.
Chairman Dies. That is not within the province of the committee.

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HAZEL HUFFMAN

Hazel Huffman was an employee of the WPA and worked as a mail clerk in the Federal Theatre Project office. At the time of her testimony she introduced herself as a representative of the Committee of Relief Status, Professional Theatrical Employees of New York City. In the following excerpt she is questioned by Chairman Martin Dies (Texas), Congressmen J. Parnell Thomas (New Jersey), John Dempsey (New Mexico), Joe Starnes (Alabama), and Congressman Harold Mosier (Ohio).

Mr. Thomas. The purpose of this testimony is to show the communistic activities in the Federal Theater Project in New York City.
Miss Huffman. To prove that communism exists and dominates the Federal Theater Project, it might be well to tell when it started and how it obtained its foothold. To correct a disease we must first know what is causing it. Is that satisfactory?
Mr. Thomas. Very well.
Miss Huffman. The Workers' Alliance, an organization closely allied with the Communist Party, which now dominates the Federal Theater Project, has from the beginning had the cooperation and support of two of the national heads of the project. Mr. Aubrey Williams, Deputy Administrator and Assistant to Mr. Harry Hopkins, promised consideration of a proposal to permit organizations of professional workers to control projects, saying that some means might be worked out giving them a larger voice in project operation.

Then we have Mrs. Hallie Flanagan the national director of the Federal Theater Project, Mrs. Flanagan was known as far back as 1927 for her communistic sympathy, if not membership. Mrs. Flanagan's book, *Shifting Scenes* —

Mr. Thomas (interposing). Who is Mrs. Hallie Flanagan?

Miss Huffman. Mrs. Hallie Flanagan is national director of the Federal Theater. My contention is - I cannot prove that Mrs. Flanagan has Communist membership, as I have never seen a card bearing her name; but I can prove Mrs. Flanagan was an active participant in Communistic activity, and that her Communistic sympathies, tendencies, and methods of organization are being used in the Federal Theater Project at the present time, to the detriment of the workers and in violation of the act of Congress.

Chairman Dies. Let us see if we can clear this up: Briefly, you have charged in your testimony that the Workers Alliance is a communistic organization: Is that true?

Miss Huffman. Yes, sir.

Chairman Dies. Leading Communists are in control of it, you say?

Miss Huffman. Yes, sir.

Chairman Dies. Your statement is that in order to retain your employment on the Federal Theater Project you must belong to the Workers Alliance. When I say "must," I mean that through fear of punishment, you are persuaded to belong to it.

Miss Huffman. Yes, sir; from fear of dismissal or demotion.

Chairman Dies. I might say in that connection that evidence which has preceded this shows that some of the officials of the Workers Alliance are well-known Communists.

Mr. Thomas. Yes; that is the point. They are receiving orders from the Communists.

Mr. Dempsey. Now you mentioned certain plays that you denominate as Communist plays: Did you name "Power" as one of them?

Miss Huffman. Yes.

Mr. Dempsey. What is there in "Power" that is communistic? Do you not confuse communistic plays with propaganda plays when you do that? Can you point to a single thing in "Power" that outstanding and splendid Members of Congress have not made reference to in connection with Government ownership?

Miss Huffman. Mr. Congressman, with any of the plays to which I referred, I would like to give my analysis of what we felt those plays were and what constitutes a propaganda play used for communistic activities.

Mr. Dempsey. Wait a minute. A propaganda play is one thing. Tell me about "Power." What is there in the play "Power" that is communistic?

Miss Huffman. Frankly, at this moment, I cannot remember the play "Power."

Mr. Dempsey. That is one you complained about very bitterly, did you not?

Miss Huffman. No; not particularly. I gave the criticism which was taken from some of the publications of the Workers Alliance.

Mr. Dempsey. You felt it was communistic?

Miss Huffman. I felt it was propaganda to be used for communistic activity; yes, sir.

Mr. Dempsey. If you read the Congressional Record, some speeches made by very fine, outstanding American citizens, members of the Senate and House, had similar statements or identical statements?

Miss Huffman. Yes, sir.

Mr. Dempsey. Even "damns" have been made after some of those gentlemen's speeches.

Miss Huffman. Yes sir. But on the newspaper productions - I believe "Power" was one - I can show you it was not things said on the floor of the House or the floor of the Senate by such men.

Mr. Dempsey. So that you may understand my position, in the first place, I am not a believer in Government ownership of railroads, or things of that kind, so do not misunderstand my question.

Miss Huffman. No; I don't.

Mr. Dempsey. I do not believe in that. I believe in private ownership of railroads, public utilities, et cetera. But this committee is created under a resolution to investigate subversive activities and un-American activities. Now if the play "Power" was put on by any Broadway producer, he would not be summoned here as un-American; because I can point to many productions that go much further than that. I can point to productions that ridicule—I would not say "ridicule," but for amusement purposes say things of the President—such as George Cohan's play in New York, which I think is a splendid production.

Miss Huffman. Congressman Dempsey, if plays have, as "Power" and the others do, their major theme of anti-capital, anti-Fascist, anti-war and pro-Soviet, depicting through the medium of self-sympathy, hunger and hatred —

Mr. Dempsey. All right, take any one of those things.

Miss Huffman (continuing). Is it not following the methods that are used by the Communists? It is done by the Communists to instill a fear of those things.

Mr. Starnes. But on the question of propaganda, I thoroughly agree with Mr. Dempsey that a propaganda play is not un-American - that is, unless it should teach class hatred. I think any politician, or any newspaper, or any play, or anything else, that gets out and incites class hatred and class prejudice is un-American. Now I am asking, in any of those plays you mentioned, is that what you had in mind?

Miss Huffman. Well the thing in the plays that most impressed me - of course, as Mr. Dempsey says, you cannot always believe what you see in the press, due to the amount of freedom they exercise; but these various organizations use these plays. They use them in strike areas where a strike is about to become ineffective, and they themselves claim they are using them in arousing them to fight the bourgeois. As a matter of fact, their slogan as given in their magazines, it is not a misprint (and I do not believe it is a misprint because it had been given 20 times), is "The bourgeois a danger to society." So that it teaches class hatred.

Mr. Starnes. That may be true, but I do not think "Power" and these others you mention do. My personal opinion is those were not un-American, although they were propaganda plays.

Mr. Mosier. Miss Huffman, what you have done before this committee, as I understand it, is to come in here and attempt to show us certain plays, out of the nine-hundred-and-some-odd that have been produced that, in your opinion, contain un-American propaganda. Now, those plays you have named are available to this committee to read?

Miss Huffman. Yes, sir.

Mr. Mosier. And I will admit to any member of the committee that there may be a

fine line on any one play. Take the play "Power". That play may fall on the opposite side of the line that you think it falls on; but your object is to call to the attention of this committee certain plays you think this committee should read and determine for itself whether those plays are un-American propaganda?

Miss Huffman. Yes, Congressman Mosier. And regarding the plays, it is my intention, and always has been my intention, to call to this committee's attention the type of propaganda that is being used and is calculated to cause a revolution in this country, to the interest of the Communist Party. In their own instructions to their people they tell how to so stage and so add additions to the classics - Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekov, and some of the rest of those writers - so as to make it propaganda for the purpose of arousing the masses, for the purpose of creating a Soviet America. They so state. I beg pardon; but from my use of the term "propaganda," I would still say they used the play for communistic propaganda, inasmuch as it is their own declared purpose to present these plays to accomplish their objective.

Mr. Dempsey. And you consider "Power" as a play in that category?

Miss Huffman. Congressman Dempsey -

Mr. Dempsey. Will you just answer that "yes" or "no"?

Miss Huffman. Yes. And permit me to use another example

Mr. Dempsey. I do not care for any more examples.

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CHARLES WALTON

Charles St. Bermay Walton was a stage manager for the New York Federal Theatre Project. In the excerpt below he is questioned by Congressman Joe Starnes (Alabama).

Mr. Starnes. What is your occupation, Mr. Walton?

Mr. Walton. Stage director on the Federal Theater Project.

Mr. Starnes. Do you hold any official connection with the Federal Theater Project?

Mr. Walton. Well, I am what is known as an administrative worker, as a director of plays.

Mr. Starnes. How long have you been engaged in activities under, with, or through the Federal Theater Project?

Mr. Walton. I was appointed a year ago last April.

Mr. Starnes. Have you had any difficulty in the plays which you have directed this far, any movement or agitation that would be deemed subversive or un-American?

Mr. Walton. No, sir; for the simple reason —

Mr. Starnes (interposing). Has any communistic propaganda been disseminated in the casts which you have directed?

Mr. Walton. No, sir; for this reason - that I have made myself very clear, at the risk of being discharged long since, that I loathe Communists, and everything un-American; I would not have one in my cast or in my plays.

Mr. Starnes. Have they had those difficulties in the casts of other plays up there?

Mr. Walton. Oh, continually.

Mr. Starnes. You personally know that large communistic elements or groups have

been placed in the casts of some of those plays?
Mr. Walton. Yes, sir.
Mr. Starnes. I use the word "placed," because, as I understand, they are all taken from the pool and placed.
Mr. Walton. Yes sir; that is correct.
Mr. Starnes. It is your statement that in making assignments or placements from the pool, those who were known to be members of the C.P.C. or the Workers Alliance were given preference over all others?
Mr. Walton. Positively.
Mr. Starnes. You know that to be a fact, from personal observations and experience?
Mr. Walton. Absolutely the fact.
Mr. Starnes. Were you ever approached to join the C.P.C. or the Workers Alliance?
Mr. Walton. Yes, sir.

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HALLIE FLANAGAN

Hallie Flanagan was selected in 1935 by Harry Hopkins to head the Federal Theatre Project as part of the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. In the following excerpt, she is questioned by Chairman Martin Dies (Texas) and Congressmen Joe Starnes (Alabama) and J. Parnell Thomas (New Jersey).

Chairman Dies. Now, will you just tell us briefly the duties of your position?
Mrs. Flanagan. Yes, Congressman Dies. Since August 29, 1935, I have been concerned with combating un-American inactivity.
Chairman Dies. No. We will get to that in a minute.
Mrs. Flanagan. Please listen. I said I am combating un-American inactivity.
Chairman Dies. Inactivity?
Mrs. Flanagan. I refer to the inactivity of professional men and women; people who, at that time when I took office, were on the relief rolls, and it was my job to expend the appropriation laid aside by congressional vote for the relief of the unemployed as it related to the field of the theater, and to set up projects wherever in any city 25 or more of such professionals were found on the relief rolls.
Mr. Starnes. Now, there is another statement you have made here, that some of the plays that were put out by the Federal Theater Project are propagandistic or that they breed class consciousness - is that true or untrue? Not all of them, because the testimony is that 924 plays have been produced, and only 26, as I recall, were in question. Let us confine ourselves to those that are in question.
Mrs. Flanagan. I do want to go into the matter of the 26 plays as much as this committee will allow me to do. But before I go into that I would like to say that I could not say that we never did a propaganda play. But I should like to go to the actual definition of "propaganda."
Propaganda, after all, is education. It is education focused on certain things. For example, some of you gentlemen have doubtless seen "One-Third of the Nation"; and I certainly would not sit here and say that that was not a propaganda play. I think in the discussion yesterday the word "propaganda" was used in this connotation only - that any play which was propaganda was necessarily propaganda for communism.

I should like to say very truthfully that to the best of my knowledge we have never done plays which was propaganda for communism, but we have done plays which were propaganda for democracy, propaganda for better housing —

Mr. Thomas. I think you ought to develop that point right there. You said that some plays were propaganda for democracy. What do you mean by that? Propaganda for what forms of democracy and what particular things? Like housing, as you just mentioned?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.

Mr. Thomas. What others?

Mrs. Flanagan. I would say - shall we go into a discussion of democracy?

Mr. Thomas. No. Just name some of the things that the Federal Theater Project has put out propaganda plays for.

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes. Well, let us say first, "One-Third of the Nation." In that the definite propaganda was for better housing for American citizens.

Mr. Thomas. What others?

Mrs. Flanagan. I would say that in general, Mr. Thomas, "The Living Newspaper" would be propaganda for -

Mr. Thomas. But you are not answering the question. You mentioned housing?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.

Mr. Thomas. How about "Power"?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes. I would say that "Power" was propaganda for a better understanding of the derivation and the scientific meaning of power and for its wide use.

Mr. Thomas. Was it for public ownership of power?

Mrs. Flanagan. That portrayed as effectively as possible both sides of that controversy, and quoted both sides.

Mr. Starnes. If there are no communistic activities on your projects, we want to know it. If there are, we think that fact should be made public. And if the facts are made public, we feel that surely you, as the directing head, will take the necessary remedial action to rid the projects of such un-American activities.

Mrs. Flanagan. You are quite right.

Mr. Thomas. I have here the script of "Injunction Granted." The last part of the script is all devoted to a criticism of the legislature in the State of New Jersey. It has to do with the Workers Alliance coming into the halls of the legislature in the State of New Jersey and sitting there and taking over the government. Do you think that that is the proper kind of propaganda to put out through the Federal Theater Project?

Mrs. Flanagan. I think that that episode was necessary in the development of a study of labor in litigation.

Mr. Thomas. This latter part has nothing to do with labor in litigation. It has to do with the Workers Alliance' criticism of the State legislature.

Mrs. Flanagan. It was headline news of that period which had a direct relevance to the theater. You see, in the Living Newspaper everything is factual. The records from which any living newspaper is taken are always open to all of you and absolutely open to anyone. And I think it is rather a remarkable fact, gentlemen, that in the 3 years of the existence of this project, the Living Newspaper, that we have done that, not one allegation had been made that the news were untrue.

Nobody has ever proved that we have ever misquoted a person or misquoted a quotation.

Mr. Starnes. The statement has been made in the testimony that you are in sympathy with communistic doctrines.

Mrs. Flanagan. Congressman Starnes, I am an American, and I believe in American democracy. I believe the Works Progress Administration is one great bulwark of that democracy. I believe the Federal Theater, which is one small part of that large pattern, is honestly trying in every possible way to interpret the best interests of the people of this democracy. I am not in sympathy with any other form of government in this country.

Mr. Starnes. That is your statement. You are absolutely not in sympathy with communism. Now, have you, as Director of this National Art Project, produced productions for the purpose of promoting class hatred, we will say?

Mrs. Flanagan. I have not.

Mr. Starnes. Do you recognize only the Workers' Alliance as the bargaining agency among employees on your project?

Mrs. Flanagan. Certainly not. We have something like 24 theatrical unions that we are dealing with constantly on this project. It is one of the most complicated ramifications which I will go into if you wish.

Mr. Starnes. No, I am trying to make this thing specific because specific statements were made .

Mrs. Flanagan. I realize that. I have specific answers if you want to go into them.

Mr. Starnes. The question was raised as to whether or not there are Communists on your project. We understand, and we know, that no restrictions have been placed on your employing people who might believe in a communistic form of government. We understand that. And unquestionably you have, according to the testimony, Communists working on the job, but the thing the committee is interested in is the question of communistic activity on the project. Do you know of your own knowledge, personal knowledge, of any communistic activities that are being carried on there, in other words, the promulgation of communistic doctrines and theory, the recruiting of soldiers of Loyalist Spain, the dissemination of communistic literature or the collection of funds for the Workers' Alliance and for the Communist Party on project time?

Mrs. Flanagan. Congressman Starnes, those are opposed to the administrative restriction, copies of which are in this brief.

Mr. Starnes. You are opposed to it, and you know nothing of it personally, but you can't deny, of course, of your own personal knowledge, such is the case, but if it is the case, it is without your knowledge and consent?

Mrs. Flanagan. Right.

Chairman Dies. Mrs. Flanagan, I want to ask you one or two questions. What, in your opinion, as the director of the Federal Theaters is the primary purpose to be kept in mind in the production of plays? Is it amusement? I am not talking about the relief angle now.

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes, sir.

Chairman Dies. I am talking about the selection of material in the production of plays. What principal objective do you keep in mind, amusement, or, on the other hand, the teaching of a particular idea or the presentation of facts or mate-

rial in a way to leave a definite impression?

Mrs. Flanagan. I am glad you asked that question, because it is an important one. The basis of the choice of plays is that we have always believed on the Federal Theater Project that any theater supported by Federal funds should do no plays of a subversive, or cheap, or shoddy, or vulgar, or outworn, or imitative nature, but only such plays as the Government could stand behind in a program which is national in scope and regional in emphasis and democratic in American attitude.

Mr. Thomas. Democratic!

Mrs. Flanagan. Not democratic in the narrow sense.

Chairman Dies. Then in a sense primarily it is for amusement; isn't that true?

Mrs. Flanagan. The second objective, if I may go on, is wide diversity. I think we should do plays of as great diversity as the geographic range and the varieties of our people. I can't say just entertainment or education, Congressman Dies.

Chairman Dies. You are not in a position to say whether the primary purpose

Mrs. Flanagan. A good play must always entertain the audience.

Chairman Dies. That is the primary purpose of it?

Mrs. Flanagan. The primary purpose of a good play is to entertain, isn't it?

Chairman Dies. Entertain?

Mrs. Flanagan. It must also and can also often teach. It can inculcate religious principles. It can entertain simply if it is a musical comedy. Think of the verities of things that it can do to train people in the great field of the classics.

Chairman Dies. It can be used as a vehicle, in other works, to impart to an audience certain ideas either along moral lines or along social lines or economic lines; isn't that a fact?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.

Chairman Dies. And in the production of these plays, while you have kept in mind primarily the objective of entertainment, you have considered it your duty likewise to convey such, we will say, instruction or to impart ideas along social and economic lines; isn't that true?

Mrs. Flanagan. I would like to answer that rather fully, because it is an important point. The list of the plays that we have done is open to you, and the proof of the types of plays that we do can be found there. Over 500 of the 924 plays are plays by tested American authors which have had previous successes on Broadway. They are plays of the great body of American—

Chairman Dies. Am I not right?

Mrs. Flanagan. I really would like to go on - I know the bell rang or something, but I really would like to get this in. That is the major field, and then there are also musical comedies, because they use great numbers of people, you see there are also children's plays which we have built up as a great specialty, chiefly fairy tales, not with the connotation mentioned, and then we have also done dance dramas, and we have placed great emphasis on the classics. We have done plays by Euripides, Plautus, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Beaumont, and Fletcher, Lope de Vega, Moliere, Sheridan, Labiche, Ibsen, Wilde, Shaw and O'Neill. And I have written into the record a list of the very distinguished dramatists whose plays we have produced. Therefore —

Chairman Dies. I asked you if you think the theater should be used for the purpose of conveying ideas along social and economic lines.
Mrs. Flanagan. I think that is one justifiable reason for the existence of the theater.
Chairman Dies. Do you think that the Federal Theater should be used for the purpose, for one purpose of conveying ideas along social, economic or political lines?
Mrs. Flanagan. I would hesitate on the political. So far as I know we have never stressed —
Chairman Dies. Eliminate political, upon social and economic lines.
Mrs. Flanagan. I think it is one logical, reasonable, and I might say imperative thing for our theater to do.
Chairman Dies. And for educational purposes; is that right?
Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.
Chairman Dies. In other words, you believe it is correct to use the Federal Theater to educate people, audiences, along social or economic lines is that correct?
Mrs. Flanagan. Among other things; yes. I have pointed out to the committee that only 10 percent of the plays that we do —
Chairman Dies. I understand. Do you not also think that since the Federal Theater Project is an agency of the Government and that all of our people support it through their tax money, people of different classes, different races, different religions, some who are workers, some who are businessmen, don't you think that that being true that no play should ever be produced which undertakes to portray the interests of one class to the disadvantage of another class, even though that might be accurate, even though factually there may be justification normally for that, yet because of the very fact that we are using taxpayer's money to produce plays, do you not think it is questionable whether it is right to produce plays that are biased in favor of one class against another?
Mrs. Flanagan. We are not doing plays to stir up class hatred.
Chairman Dies. Then this Federal Theater is a very powerful vehicle of expression isn't it, and of propaganda, because as you say, it reaches 25,000,000 people. It therefore can be used or abused.
Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.
Chairman Dies. With serious consequences, can it not?
Mrs. Flanagan. Yes, sir.
Chairman Dies. And do you know of any way in which it could be more seriously abused than it would be to portray, as I said a few moments ago, one class, putting them at an advantage over another class?
Mrs. Flanagan. I have been giving a long list of illustrations of the fact that we do not so do.
Chairman Dies. What is the objective of the play, what impression is it designed to bring in the mind of the audience—take the play "Power"—that public ownership is a good thing?
Mrs. Flanagan. I think the first thing the play does is to make you understand more about power, where it comes from, and how it has evolved, about its whole historical use.
Chairman Dies. All right.
Mrs. Flanagan. I think it also does speak highly for the public ownership of power.
Chairman Dies. Let us just take that one instance. We will assume, for the sake of argument that maybe the public ownership of power is a desirable thing, but do

you not think it improper that the Federal Theater, using the taxpayers' money, should present a play to the audience which champions one side of a controversy?

Mrs. Flanagan. No, Congressman Dies; I do not consider it improper. I have just said that I felt that in a small percentage of our plays, and pointed out that it is 10 percent that do hold a brief for a certain cause in accord with general forwardlooking tendencies, and I say —

Chairman Dies. Who is to determine what is a forward-looking tendency?

Mrs. Flanagan. Why, our play policy board chooses these plays.

Chairman Dies. They are to determine the question as to what is a forward-looking tendency. They therefore would have the idea that public ownership of utilities was a forward-looking tendency?

Mrs. Flanagan. Also, with the idea, Congressman Dies, that first the play must be good, it must have the power to hold people in the audience.

Chairman Dies. I am assuming that, but we are confining ourselves to the proposition- take "Power" - you say that your policy board must first pass on this, isn't that right?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes.

Chairman Dies. Then your policy board approves the question of public ownership of utilities. Then you think that because they approve the principle of public ownership of utilities, you believe it is proper that the Federal theaters shall exhibit a play in which it champions the right to public ownership, do you not?

Mrs. Flanagan. I think so.

Chairman Dies. So that it comes down to this, as a correct statement, does it not, that with reference to the plays themselves you can say unequivocally that none of them were communistic?

Mrs. Flanagan. Right.

Chairman Dies. In other words, we heard considerable testimony which forms an important part of this, that numerous people working on the project were Communist. We got that from one or two who are members of the Communist party themselves. We got it from their own signatures, and statements that they were Communists, and received testimony that Communist literature was disseminated through the premises during project time, that they were printed on the bulletin board until this investigation began and it stopped, that meetings of the Communists units were held on project time in the premises, and other testimony. I am just citing you some of the high lights. Now, that is the material fact involved here, so to whether that was done.

Mrs. Flanagan. I think you must be confusing some of our testimony, because I have read it very carefully, because I have not found a single witness brought up before us that said he was a Communist.

Chairman Dies. Before us?

Mrs. Flanagan. Before you.

Chairman Dies. Well, Mr. DeSolo said he was a Communist.

Mrs. Flanagan. But he is not on the Federal Theater Project.

Chairman Dies. He is on the Writers Project.

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes; but not our project.

Chairman Dies. You are dealing with the Federal Theater Project.

Mrs. Flanagan. Because that is what I have jurisdiction over.

Evaluation Activities

The purpose of these concluding activities is to draw the lessons in this unit together and provide students an opportunity to synthesize the diverse materials and activities.

You may use these activities at different stages in the unit or have students select one of the activities at the beginning of the unit and gather data to develop this culminating activity during the process of the lessons.

Individual Essays

Assign one of the following essays or allow students to choose from these or other essay topics. The essay could be done in class or as a take-home essay.

1. "Assess the pros and cons of government sponsored programs in the arts."
2. "Evaluate the government's role in promoting artistic expression."
3. Agree or Disagree with the following statement: "The New Deal's efforts to help people, the 'one-third of a nation' that were ill-nourished, ill-clad, and ill-housed, was necessary due to the emergency needs caused by the Great Depression; but should not be continued in times of prosperity."

Group Work

1. Have students work in pairs and assign one to assume the role of a speech writer for Franklin Roosevelt and the other a vocal opponent of the Roosevelt administration. Each student prepares a speech focusing on the role of government in promoting artistic expression as a response the Great Depression. The students pairs should work closely together to write speeches which deal with the issue in a point/counterpoint approach. This activity would require in-class time for students to work together.

2. Conduct a "Meeting of the Minds" or "Cross-Fire" activity in which students assume the roles of individuals from different backgrounds during the Depression era. Students on the panel could assume the roles of persons such as Herbert Hoover, John Steinbeck, Andrew Mellon, Dorothea Lange, Harry Hopkins, Huey Long, Frances Perkins, etc. Select a group of students to develop questions on issues encountered during the study of the Depression era and have one of the group serve as moderator. Each member of the "celebrity panel" responds to one or more questions and may rebut statements of other panel members.

3. Construct a photographic exhibit on the Depression era using Dorothea Lange's photographs. Select excerpts from speeches of public figures, passages from literary works, and selections from oral history interviews as captions for the illustrations.

   You may wish to have students assume the roles of members of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Un-American Activities, and respond to the photographic exhibit from their character's perspective.