

after the first Japanese Communist Party had been decimated in 1923, delegates to a Comintern meeting in Shanghai in 1925 were rebuked severely for not understanding the Marxist-Leninist line and ordered to reform the Party. Without this sentence the paragraph does not make much sense. The phrase, "Betsuyaku Minro, a dropout from the politics and economics department of Waseda University," on page 160 represents another editorial error. I originally pointed out the fact that Betsuyaku dropped out of school in 1960—I did not label one of Japan's finest playwrights a dropout. Readers

will also note that Saito Tadashi and Nakamura Masaki, the two architects of Theatre Center 68/71's tent, did not author the quotation on page 165; the quotation is from a jointly written and unsigned prospectus for the Center's tent theatre and was footnoted in this way in my original manuscript.

David Goodman,  
Editor  
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(Editor's Note: The Special Asian Theatre Issue, T-50, was edited by Erika Munk and her staff. A. J. Gunawardana acted as Special Editor of the issue.)

## Working-Class Theatre in Vienna

### THE EDITOR:

While traveling in Europe last summer, I often found myself disappointed by shows that had some "reputation." I was pleasantly surprised, however, by the *Tschauner's Stegreifbuehne* in Vienna. I happened to hear about this small theatre from a cobbler, who had repaired the handle of my handbag. He told me that he and his wife liked to attend the performances at this little theatre. His enthusiasm inflamed my interest.

The theatre is located in a small yard in a working-class district on the outskirts of Vienna. The best seats cost 18 Austrian shillings (less than a dollar). These are wooden benches in front of a covered box stage. Informed playgoers bring their own blankets and pillows along to cushion the seats. Faust conjuring Mephistopheles in a cloud of smoke is painted on the curtain. To the left, a woman plays Austrian folk melodies on a piano, while the "house" fills up.

The play I saw was called *Liebeslotterie* (Lottery of Love), a comedy in

the southern rustic tradition. There was a peasant couple and their son (the handsome lover), the village priest, the curious neighbor, and the woman's first lover who returned from America, having become a successful businessman, having never known that he was the father of a pretty daughter. There were various tokens and letters misdelivered and misinterpreted, facts confused, people upset over trifles, etc. Two other main characters were: the idiotic servant, who tried to be extra smart and only succeeded in getting himself and everyone else tangled up in a series of mistakes; and the wealthy innkeeper's daughter, eccentric, blunt and frantically searching for a potential husband.

The audience reacted spontaneously and without inhibitions. There were loud remarks, applause, and of course a lot of laughter during the performance. The actors dealt with any interruption in a remarkably nonchalant and witty way. I could not help but admire the alertness with which they handled occasional street noises (such as the siren of a passing police car), or unex-

pected audience reactions, by incorporating them into the play. Some jokes were delivered as asides, but not as a rule. Sometimes a drily spoken line referred to a remark from the audience or to a recent local event. It was acknowledged with roaring applause while the actors stayed in character. The movements of the actors were naturally awkward (natural in their awkwardness), the blocking seemed emotional and motivated by the flow of the play, the expressions sincere.

During intermission, I went backstage, where I met the director, Mrs. Karoline Tschauner, a friendly elderly lady. I found out that there was no blocking at all, since there were no rehearsals. The actors moved according to their own discretion. This was a true impromptu and improvisatory theatre, which presented a different show each night (except Wednesday).

The actors, who know each other well and have been working together for several years, meet at 6 p.m. At this time, they are given the scenario and

their parts. They are typecast in a way, but Mrs. Tschauner said that the actor playing the idiotic servant was also capable of playing the tragic lover; the old peasant could play a Hanswurst.

The actors then discuss their relationships and some jokes of the day (mostly political or social) before the performance. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. The entrances are "suggested" by the director, but the exits are up to the actor's discretion.

No story is ever repeated. An original play is given each night. Mrs. Tschauner said she got the ideas for her scenarios from "the daily papers, cartoons. I really have more ideas than showdays in a summer."

The actors come from various fields and occupations: clerks, housewives, teachers, businessmen, artisans, etc. Their profit is minimal. They do it, obviously, for their own pleasure and delight, dilettantes in the best sense of the word.

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## ***American Film Institute Catalog***

The American Film Institute has just published an introductory two-book volume entitled *Feature Films: 1921-1930*. The volume is the first in a series of the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*.

One book in the volume, which runs to 936 pages, lists feature motion pictures in alphabetic order, with comprehensive information given under each entry, including production and copyright details, as well as content description and genre (e.g., literary, dramatic, non-dramatic, etc.)

The second book in the volume has, along with a full Credit Index, a very

important Subject Index that deals in depth with the topical content of films listed in the first book of the volume. This index covers general areas other than the film per se, such as events and trends of the period covered by the volume, historical events referred to in films, theatre, actors and actresses, costumes, places, etc.

Kenneth W. Munden, executive editor of the *American Film Institute Catalog*, used special computer technology to process data. The volume, however, is not the first in the order in which the complete series will finally appear on the shelf. The *Catalog* will eventually begin with a general volume