



*New Masses*: The photograph is a scene from the play *A Rebellion at Mt. Tsukuba*, by the Communist playwright Saburo Ochiai, produced by the Shin-Tsukiji Theatre, the only radical theatre now active in Japan. The scene presented is a conference of an underworld group of counter-revolutionaries including three Geisha girls, gangsters (Japanese "Sochi") and a spy. The play was a great success. The Shin-Tsukiji Theatre was established in May, 1929 and during its first year produced about 20 plays including: *Roar China!* by S. Teriakov; *Mother* by Gorky; *The Armoured Train* by Ivanov; *All Quiet On The Western Front* by Remarque; *The Uprising* by Sekichi-Fujimori; *There Is No Limit* by Tomoyoshi-Murayama and others. The theatre has two directors and 15 actors and actresses, including Miss Yasue-Yamamoto, one of the ablest players in Japan. I am on the theatre's staff of translators and we are now interested in the production of the American plays *Hoboken Blues*, and *Fiesta* by Michael Gold, *Airways* by John Dos Passos and others produced by the New Playwrights Theatre.—

Sincerely,

—RYOCHI NAKAGAWA

Tokyo, Japan.

## MOVIES

By SAMUEL BRODY

*Holiday*, a Pathe Production, Shown at the Cameo Theatre, New York.

The tables are turned. There was a time when Hollywood served as a source of artistic initiative and study for the Russian directors. Today the Soviet Union is the only country that bears high the best traditions of the American movie which it is ever enriching thru its own experiences and on an independent non-commercial basis. Today the Pudovkins, Vertoffs and Eisensteins can look upon films like *Holiday* and justifiably scoff at the incompetence and backwardness of American filmdom.

*Holiday* is a supreme effort of cinema to become as much the theatre as possible. It is more competent theatre than even Mamoulian's *Applause*, which definitely eliminated the use of intervals thru the moving camera. This means that the visual continuity of the stage is grafted on to the camera. In *Holiday* this is accomplished with remarkable competence. The close-up thereby loses its significance as a unit of montage, as "a word in a sentence." The fade, the role of which as a determinant of rhythm is highly important in a film, is used to simply imitate the curtain-drop on the stage. The interpretation is in the best tradition of the orthodox *drame de salon*, with all its fineries and anachronous art.

The modern cinema laboring hard to give birth to a reincarnated theatre which we thought long dead and forgotten. For shame!

*Holiday*. A theme to gladden the heart of every emancipated and "modern" American bourgeois. You see, it is bad to waste all your life money-seeking. The stubborn old financier who gets no fun out of life and is constantly preoccupied with ABC-preferred and gilt-edge securities. Linda, the emancipated daughter who envies the poor because "they, at least, have something to look forward to—they want to be like us." Poor little rich folks, bound hand and foot by Mammon. Johnny Case, the boy who wants only a paltry twenty-thousand dollars to take a long *holiday* and to do as he pleases—and who practically has his way, in the end.

Somebody ought to post a \$5,000 reward for the capture, dead or alive, of the guy who, writing in a well-known labor daily in New York, said: "It is one of the best films of the year and those who have in the past scoffed at the talking pictures will now have to admit that cinema producers can turn out masterpieces."

Oh yeah?

*The Law of The Siberian Taiga*, A Kinobir Production, U.S.S.R. Shown at the Cameo Theatre, New York.

Those backward Russians! Still turning out silent films nearly five years after "we" have "revolutionized," "rejuvenated," "remade" the art of cinema. While we have wired from top to bottom and have gone "all talking-all sounding-all-everything!"

In fact, Russian pictures are scarcer than ever nowadays. Even the ritzy "little" theatres don't show them as often as they did about a year ago. Which makes a film like *The Law of the Siberian Taiga* all the more refreshing in this desert of noisy box-office celluloid.

It is by no means a great film. It is too much a "story" picture, and not a very gripping one at that. The documentary nature of the film might have fared better with a straighter theme.

On the other hand its ethnographic and political implications are beyond criticism, while some very original mounting make it a film which holds you thruout its length. There is something which defies words of description in these Soviet films dealing with the formerly oppressed national minorities and the new relationships created by the Revolution. They are the epics of the rise of unknown peoples. They are immortal documents of Communism's struggle to restore backward and downtrodden sections of mankind. And what material for directors, cameramen, etc.

The Tungus tribes which figure in this film are the most photogenic actors in the world. In fact, they are the greatest actors you have ever seen. That is, if you still think of the movies in terms of actors—"stars." In the Soviet Union they don't, and that accounts for pictures like *The Law of The Siberian Taiga*.

Russian films rarely get around to the cheaper neighborhood houses where workers might see them. They remain condemned to the exclusive "art cinemas".

In Europe successful workers film societies are organized for the showing of pictures of special interest to workers. Can't we do something like it here?

*Raffles*, a United Artists Production Shown at the Rialto Theatre, New York.

Can't we put the Fish Committee on the job? Everytime I think of the picture I see red.

It's all papier machè from the sets to the dramatis personae, and it's high time that something be done about these things.