

# Olivier's 'Hamlet' is worth shouting about—critic says

By Bob Bennett

LAURENCE OLIVIER, who bowled the customers over with a remarkably fine and exciting adaptation of Shakespeare's "Henry V" for the films, has now set 'em up in the other alley—and again achieved a movie worth shouting about.

Olivier's version of the tragedy of "Hamlet" makes going to the movie: the kind of experience it only too rarely is and more frequently ought to be. "Hamlet" has fine acting, wonderful sets and music and intelligent, perceptive editing. All in all, it's really something.

But now that I've led my few faithful—and bewildered constituents this far out on a limb, I'm going to enter a few objections lest they beseege the editor and scream for their money back.

I think "Hamlet" is wonderful stuff—on the stage. On the screen—well, it's exciting, it's moving, it's interesting—and it

has big chunks that are just plain dull and a mite dreary.

Mind you, I have no doubt that if Will himself had done the movie version it might be something, but he didn't—and there's the rub, to steal a phrase from the old boy. To add monotony to insult and injury, the theatre and the film are two different and separate art forms. Each has its own discipline, its own technique and its own unique function.

I have no objection per se to adapting plays for the films. It's just that with something like "Hamlet" Olivier was strapped; he could cut and edit, but he couldn't change the basic line and approach of the play.

Now the very special thing about the film is that at its highest and most refined level, the camera becomes—in the hands of a real film artist—a creative instrument, just as the brush is for the painter or the piano for the virtuoso.

Confined, as Olivier's camera is to the Elsinore, you get in effect a photographed play without getting the three-dimensional effect of the stage. True, Olivier takes his camera on some sweeping tours of the palace and whirls over the grim winding battlements, but for all that the film is still largely static.

The Russians and the French seem to understand use of the camera best and their films prove it. John Ford and Frank Capra used to achieve it once in a while here, but the only film artist extant in the U.S. right now is Charlie Chaplin (if you've seen M. Verdoux you know what I mean.)

Shakespeare is a man with ideas—hundreds of ideas. (No, Mr. Olivier, this is NOT a story of a man who couldn't make up his mind.) All of them are provocative and interesting—but they were designed for presentation on a stage—not for

transmission through a camera. Nevertheless, in spite of these reservations, Olivier and the cast he assembled did a magnificent job of acting and the result is a film well worth seeing—even at roadshow prices. After all, "Hamlet" is "Hamlet."

### Did you know?

Prices paid by farmers, including interest and taxes, are down less than 2 percent from July.

# DeMaio tells why Fineman was expelled from UE

Ernest DeMaio, president of District 11, United Electrical Workers (CIO), this week disclosed the background of the case in which Al Fineman, president of Local 1121, was expelled from the union.

The District Council of the union, acting on recommendation of the Appeals Committee, voted to expel Fineman on two charges, chief of which was failure to initiate grievance action after about 100 workers were laid off recently out of seniority

in violation of contract provisions between UE and the Mitchell Manufacturing Co. of Chicago.

Most of the laid-off workers were Negroes.

The president and business representative of Local 1121 was also charged with having "proposed and had written into a contract a clause weakening the seniority system and preventing the recall of Negro and white workers who are laid off for a year or more."

# WFTU will continue even though CIO has left it

By Israel Epstein

James B. Carey of the CIO and Arthur Deakin of the British Trades Congress have announced that they are taking their organizations out of the World Federation of Trade Unions, thus severing 16 million U.S. and British organized workers from over 60 million others represented in the organization.

The WFTU was founded in October, 1945, to unite labor throughout the world. Among the aims stated in its unanimously approved constitution and founding resolution were the following:

To combat war and the causes of war and work for a stable and enduring peace; to organize the struggle of unions in all countries against all encroachments on the economic and social rights of the workers and democratic liberties (and) for security and full employment.

To imbue the working people with the spirit of international solidarity and labor unity in the struggle for the speediest and most complete eradication of the remnants of fascism; to strengthen trade unity and resolutely to combat all those who might attempt to disrupt this unity and to weaken or divide the forces of the working people.

As its first conference Carey said the WFTU was "the consummation of the dearest wishes" of CIO Pres. Philip Murray. "Our participation in international affairs will not be on a 50 percent basis," Carey promised. "We intend to assume full responsibility to our own members and the workers of the world."

In the years that followed, the WFTU carried out protests

and demonstrations against oppression of labor in fascist Spain, Greece and Portugal in Europe; China, India, Iran, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon in Asia; Brazil, Chile and Argentina in Latin America, and Egypt and the Sudan in Africa. It mobilized world unions in protests against the Taft-Hartley law in the U. S. It pressed for representation in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, but was defeated by the votes of the U. S. and some other powers. These actions were broader and more universal than any in the world labor history of the past.

### COLD WAR CAUSE

While the WFTU acted jointly on these matters of common interest, it has not infringed on the autonomy of member organizations, which had full independence in home politics. The growing split in the WFTU was a result of external issues introduced into the movement by the policies of the "cold war."

The rift in the world body began in early 1948, when British and American delegates tried to swing it behind the Marshall Plan. This was opposed not only by Soviet and Chinese delegates, but also by the French and Italians. Soviet trade union Pres. Vassili Kuznetsov then told Carey in compromise

discussions: "Soviet unions do not object to economic assistance by one country to another, including of course U.S. help. They do oppose any conditions leading to the economic and political subjugation of countries receiving help. Unions cannot be forbidden to vote either for or against the Marshall Plan without undermining trade union unity."

At a meeting of the WFTU executive in Rome in May 1948, a compromise was reached, reaffirming the autonomy of all members. The organization was saved largely through the appeals of union leaders both within and outside its ranks. Typically, Pres. Kazuyoshi Dobashi of the 400,000-strong Japanese Communications Workers Union urged CIO Pres. Philip Murray to "take every possible measure to prevent tragic disruption of world labor unity represented by the WFTU, produced by labor's realization for international labor solidarity after World War II, which caused workers innumerable sacrifices."

The final crisis was precipitated by the demand of the CIO and TUC that the WFTU "suspend its activities" for a year because of the strained state of international politics, meaning preparation for World War III. The demand was rejected by the majority of WFTU delegates, who remained loyal to the constitutional provisions that required the world body to do everything to fight war trends. The CIO and TUC, heavily involved in "selling" the Marshall Plan and Truman doctrine, now wish to form a new "world" labor group committed to these policies.

The only other WFTU group supporting the CIO-TUC move is the right-wing Dutch trade union federation, which has refused to protest Dutch aggression in Indonesia. The company is poor. No other is available for such a maneuver. In the meantime, the majority of the WFTU unions has decided to carry on, trying as always to bring U. S. and British workers back into the world fraternity.

## Weekly guitar class announced

A new series of classes in folk style guitar playing has been announced by People's Songs. Instructing the course will be Jim Blaut, popular young guitarist-balladeer. Classes, the first to be Feb. 7, will be held weekly at 7:30 p.m. on Mondays, at the home of Martha Fears, 1204 N. State St. Beginning and advanced students will be accepted, and fee is \$1.25 per session. Registration is Monday, Jan. 31 between 7:30 and 9 p.m. at Miss Fears home, telephone WH 4-7786.

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