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**To Be, Or To “Boondoggle”? That is the Question:
The Conflicts of Art, Relief, and Economics within the Federal
Theatre Project**

Rachel Gilbert, Class of 2011

The Great Depression is little celebrated by America’s popular history. The mythology and icons that surround the period are bleak: a worn migrant mother staring into the middle distance, a long line of men waiting for soup and bread, ramshackle hoovervilles hovering on the edges of cities and parks. During these desperate times even humble handicrafts brought their own sets of controversies. The noun ‘boon doogle’ refers to a crafted item of leather, rope, or canvas made by Boy Scouts and those with idle hands alike, a staple of summer camps and quiet moments. However, on April 4, 1935, the boon doogle transformed from a craft to an accusation of sinful waste with the New York Time’s publication of an expose on the crafty activities of the New Deal. As the article exposed, Works Progress Administration officials used over three million dollars of New Deal relief funds – the same funds that built dams and filled soup pots – to teach crafts to the unemployed. Outraged, the general public and pundits alike latched onto the new term “boondoggle” and hurled it at any perceived waste of public money. The public’s distaste for the mismanagement of their tax dollars played a major role in the relief works of the mid-to-late 1930s. Projects involving the building of American infrastructure, such as the construction of the Hoover dam, produced tangible results with minimal public outcry. On the other hand, both public and private support for the white-collar projects of Federal One – designed to relieve and reemploy American actors, artists, musicians, and writers through the WPA – was rare. Of the projects of Federal One, the Federal Theatre Project [FTP] and its short history were marred by numerous political and economic conflicts, undermining the FTP’s ability to both produce art and provide relief.

The FTP was by far the largest project under Federal One: at its peak, the FTP employed over twelve-thousand individuals – ninety percent of whom came from relief rolls – and produced plays

for twenty-five million audience members by 1939, four years after its foundation. As Federal One's most visible project, the FTP attracted as many critics as admirers throughout its operation. From the very beginning of the project in 1935, it was labeled a "boondoggle" by critics, a waste of money that could be spent on infrastructure rather than mounting un-American, Communist-sympathetic productions which were sure to be absolutely terrible. Fearful of competition, Broadway producers and other theatre professionals complained that government sponsorship gave the FTP an unfair advantage, while theatre unions barred their members from FTP productions regardless of their relief status or need. Yet during its short life, the FTP and its members created some of the best American theatre of the 1930s. Orson Wells' proletarian musical *The Cradle will Rock* and his Haitian-set Voodoo *Macbeth*, T.S. Elliot's poetic drama *Murder in the Cathedral*, the Living Newspapers *Power and It Can't Happen Here* were all produced by FTP members and government funds. FTP units tailored their productions to the needs and rhythms of their community

The history of the FTP itself is one of conflicts: between its desire to create art and its duty to employ out-of-work artists, between its supporters and critics, between vital New Deal program and "boondoggle." Historians who've studied the conflict have framed the FTP in two main ways. The first is extremely romantic, in which the FTP was far too advanced for the New Deal and could not be understood in its own time. Jane DeHart Mathews' seminal study of the FTP, *The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939: Plays, Relief, and Politics*, narrates a slightly saccharine version of the noble FTP's history. Susan Quinn's *Furious Improvisation: How the WPA and a Cast of Thousands made High Art out of Desperate Times* also chronicled the FTP, depending on the pathos of the FTP's short life story to engage her audience. The second view mainly deals with the assignment of blame where the FTP's needed activities were discontinued by politicians in Washington DC, who could not understand the project and shut it down out of fear. Other studies of the FTP focus on specific areas, such as Barry B. Witham's *The Federal Theatre Project - A Case Study* focused on Seattle, Washington, or Paul Sporn's *Against Itself: The Federal Theatre and Writers' Projects in the Midwest*, which specifically studied Michigan's FTP units.

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Historians have also studied the impact of specific individuals in great detail, as evident in the numerous analyses of Orson Wells and his musical *The Cradle will Rock*. Witham's *A Case Study* showcases the role of African Americans and other racial minorities as uniquely important and complicated in comparison to other New Deal Projects and FTP studies. However, many studies of the FTP gloss over or omit the tensions between providing relief and producing art within the project.

This study specifically addresses three forces which impacted the FTP: Producing art, providing relief, and funding the project as a whole. While these forces are not exclusive unto themselves, the simultaneous execution of all three equally proved a difficult, if not impossible, task. The impossibility is apparent in the interactions of the FTP with its national bureaucracy, within individual units and unions, and even with its most vehement critics and opponents. FTP productions were also not immune to these forces, as evident in the controversies surrounding performances of *Ethiopia* and *Lysistrata* in 1936, *Power and The Revolt of the Beavers* in 1937. The project's investigation by the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1938 and subsequent termination in the summer of 1939 serves as the final battleground for the three forces. These tensions are evident not only in the surviving records of the FTP, which include memos, accounting reports, and production books, but in contemporary critical reviews and press about the project. The Federal Theatre Project, while attempting to simultaneously provide relief and produce art for the masses, did not measure up to other New Deal programs in terms of practical application. In the context of the Great Depression, methods used to quantify the success of other projects - such as the numbers of bridges built and soup kitchens opened - labeled the FTP a waste in times of desperate need, thus creating an easy target for cost-cutting regardless of artistic value.

The Foundation and Economics of the Federal Theatre

On May 6, 1935, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 7034. With one fell swoop, the order established the Works Progress Administration [WPA], charged with administrating a national work relief program in the face of the Great

Depression. While unemployment relief programs were the immediate goal of the WPA, Order No. 7034 also established that the WPA would operate "in such manner as to move from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible." To achieve these goals, President Roosevelt allotted approximately five billion dollars to the WPA from funds established by the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, as kept by the Secretary of the Treasury. The order also promoted the current Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, Harry Hopkins, as the head of the WPA.

The Federal Theatre Project [FTP] itself was established as a member of Federal One on August 2, 1935, one of four national arts relief projects. Consisting of the FTP, the Federal Writers' Project, the Federal Music Project, and the Federal Arts Project, Federal One operated as a single unit under the WPA. During the summer of 1935, Hopkins appointed Hallie Flanagan - noted playwright and then-director of the Vassar College department of theatre - to serve as the national director of the FTP. In Flanagan, the fledgling FTP found a leader full of intelligence, passion, and an inexhaustible will to see the project succeed. During her tenure at Vassar, Flanagan pushed the theatre department to experimentation and subsequent acclaim, rejecting the contemporary commercial theatre model. To the FTP, Flanagan brought experiments and new theatrical ideals, imploring her peers that "our whole emphasis in the theatre enterprise should be on rethinking rather than remembering. The good old days may have been good days indeed, but they are gone. New days are upon us and the plays that we do and the ways that we do them should be informed by our consciousness of the art and economics of 1935." For Flanagan, the FTP was not only a means of reemploying out of work theatre practitioners, but to refashion American theatre as a whole. The new American theatre would be relevant, exciting, and affordable to all citizens, not just those audience members sitting in New York theatres.

Flanagan and Hopkins structured the FTP to give its members a significant degree of artistic freedom with an administrative safety net. To achieve this, the FTP originally divided the nation into

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thirteen geographical regions with their own nationally appointed regional directors, whom would administer over the FTP activities of his or her region. In 1936, the thirteen regions were simplified to five. State directors existed under and reported to the regional directors, and directors of specific projects – such as those in urban cities – stationed under the state director. And since the FTP as a whole existed within the WPA structure, all decisions, paperwork, and profits were required to make their way back to Washington. Within this structure, the inclusion of state WPA officials existed mainly as a way to control the flow of federal funds into the state's FTP units, as these administrators would ensure that the FTP complied with WPA regulations.

The basic economics of the FTP, however, were less complex than its overall administration. As a project under the WPA, the FTP's first goal was the reemployment of out-of-work theatre professionals from relief rolls, a goal that took precedence over Flanagan's hope for a new American theatre. From the five billion dollars allotted to the WPA by the Emergency Relief Act of 1935, twenty-seven million of it funded the four projects of Federal One. The FTP itself received over six million dollars of funding in October 1935. According to WPA regulations, ninety percent of all federal funding could be used only on wages for relief employees; the remaining ten percent would be spent on other, non-labor costs. The FTP's pay scale was determined by a worker's skill. As such, the FTP classified an individual as professional, skilled, intermediate, and unskilled, with each categorization earning a different wage. "Professional" workers included leading actors, stage directors, designers, and administrative managers, "skilled" referred to secondary actors, wardrobe managers, senior bookkeepers, and flymen, as compared to the "unskilled" janitors and cloakroom attendants.

The grossly uneven split between relief wages and production expenses in the FTP's budget was a double-edged sword: on one hand, the FTP had the means to reemploy the majority of out-of-work theatre professionals in the nation. However, the remaining ten percent of funds could only go so far in renting theatres, buying materials and play rights and office supplies, building sets, publiciz-

ing productions, and other things necessary to the running of a theatre. Combined with this split was the desire that the majority of FTP performances be offered for free, or for a very low admission cost to reach the greatest audience possible. Such requirements and regulations created a paradox for the FTP. The project charged with employing the unemployed in new and vital American theatre could afford only to pay the actors, but not to mount the production. To help defray non-labor costs, the FTP encouraged units to find cooperating sponsors to help financially support their activities. Potential sponsors were limited to "a public body or a private organization incorporated, not for profit," in order to reduce the conflict between the sponsor's and the WPA's political ideologies.

From the end of 1935 through the beginning of 1936, the Federal Theatre was consumed with its own creation. As many FTP units prepared to mount their first productions, few could predict the artistic and political difficulties their federal funding would bring them.

Conflicts of Competing Administrations

The struggles of the FTP to establish units throughout the nation quickly proved that the theoretical unity of the WPA and FTP's combined bureaucracies was an unrealistic ideal. Before a unit could be established, each FTP state director needed to meet with and gain the approval of their state WPA directors. However, reactions from the state WPA officials varied widely. In Iowa, the WPA official refused to recognize the "boondoggle" arts project until all of the state's construction projects were completed. In New Jersey, as Flanagan seethed, "Our state director is called (in order to satisfy some strange, sadistic desire on the part of the WPA director) a 'special representative' and is not allowed to communicate with us except in the third person through letters signed by assistant WPA officials." Flanagan had prepared the regional and state FTP directors for the worst in terms of red tape in the October 1935 D.C. work shop. Yet the difficulties of gaining WPA support for FTP activities and the nightmares of navigating a complex national bureaucracy proved too much for the majority of the FTP directors and by April 1936, sixteen of the twenty-four original FTP directors had resigned their posts.

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Flanagan's early correspondence with other FTP administrators and officials foreshadowed many of the issues that would plague the FTP's administration. As the FTP existed within the overall bureaucratic structure of the WPA, but functioned as an independent project, conflicts between administrations were unavoidable. Since the outcome of the FTP reflected on the WPA and vice versa, these conflicts had direct repercussions for both administrations. In January 1936 – after months of hard work, national organization, and coaxing of wary theatre practitioners - Flanagan protested the illogical chain of command and subsequent lack of autonomy for FTP officials. Within a terse memo to WPA Administrator Jacob Baker, Flanagan vented her frustrations and included a chart which served as a representation of the confusion between administration; red and blue lines spanned from one name to the next with little logic or order.

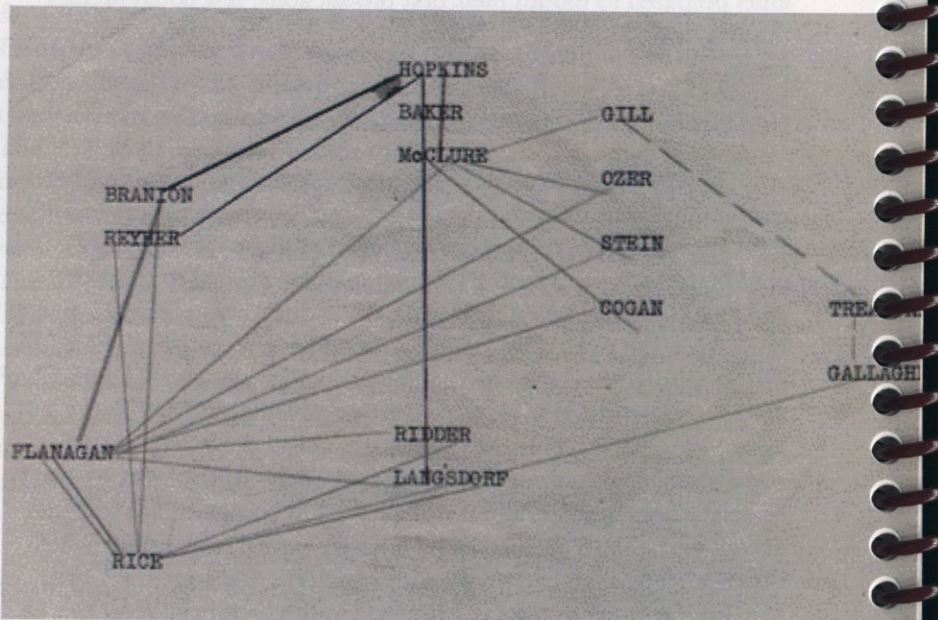


Figure 3: The chart included with Flanagan's Jan. 1936 memo.

As Flanagan fumed:

Mr. Rice must operate only through Langsdorf and Ridder. Langsdorf and Ridder take orders only from Baker; thus Rice asks Flanagan for a ruling, - Flanagan knows what the ruling should be but can give no order without asking Baker. Baker, having appointed Flanagan to do a certain job, nevertheless, requests that, before such an order is carried out, Flanagan get Ridder's opinion sent, not through Flanagan, but directly to Baker.

The success of the FTP, an ambitious enough project before the creation of its complex administration, depended on the economy of its leader's actions. In Flanagan's view, the created structure impeded the FTP's national progress far more than it assisted. As opposition to the "boondoggling" nature of the New Deal and its numerous arts projects increased, within both rural America and the halls of Washington DC, the FTP stood at a standstill, bound by red tape and administrative opposition. In October of 1935, Flanagan promised the artists and administrators of the project via their instruction manuals a large amount of freedom, and stated "the Regional Director, with the cooperation of existing Works Progress Administration officials in his region, will direct the functions of the Federal Theatre Project," In January, however, that promise was all but impossible in light of the red tape all FTP administrators were forced to wade through.

Another blow to the FTP's autonomy came in the form of the aborted production of *Ethiopia* in January 1936. The Ethiopian crisis began in October 3, 1935, as fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia without declaring war. Italian military and air forces easily overwhelmed the country, even attacking Red Cross aids and using poisonous mustard gas, which had been banned in 1925 by the League of Nations. An international event of great importance, the crisis was the perfect subject of the FTP's first production and Living Newspaper. *The Living Newspaper* was the FTP's most experimental theatrical form; live players and a singular narrator, combined with projections, sound, and a bare stage, came together to dramatize important national and social issues. *The Living Newspaper*, Flanagan beamed,

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“had liveliness and vitality...it gave an unusual sense of reality to the material, and that is what acting is for.” A staff of reporters, copyreaders, and editors worked on each Newspaper to ensure the accuracy of its material. For *Ethiopia*, the New York unit employed a troop of African musicians stranded in the city, to “beat drums, sing, and shout in the courtyard of Hallie Selassie.”. The editors also wished to include speeches by Benito Mussolini and Selassie, as well as recordings of President Roosevelt; to include them, the editor-in-chief Morris Watson requested permission directly from the White House. On January 18, Jacob Baker ordered Flanagan:

No issue of the living newspaper shall contain any representation of the head or one of the ministers or the cabinet of any foreign state unless such representation shall have been approved in advance by the Department of State. In view of the impracticality of getting advance approval in sufficient time to give timeliness to the performance of the living newspaper, it seems to me that it is necessary that there not be included any representations of such persons.

Elmer Rice, the director of New York City's FTP unit, was infuriated by the WPA's interference with the artistic choices of the FTP. When he and Flanagan visited Baker's office, Rice gave his ultimatum, restore Ethiopia in its original form, or Rice would resign. Baker, however, produced a form for Rice's resignation and signed it in front of them both.

The implications for the FTP were clear: if the government objected to any of the FTP's artistic choices, their rights as producers and patron could be used to stop the production in question. While Baker and Hopkins' reasoning – that the government not be involved in the portrayal of international figures, lest they create a diplomatic crisis – seemed to complement the importance of the FTP, it also served as a preemptive license for politically based censorship and the crippling of the project's independence.

Unlikely Critics: Unions and Theatre Professionals

Criticism of the FTP originated from numerous expected sources: politicians who opposed the seemingly unlimited spending of the New Deal, pundits who resented the government's attempt to force high culture on the common man, or conservatives who were offended by what they saw on stage. Yet some of the most vehement opposition to the FTP came from the already established theatre community, a group which should theoretically have been helped by the project. To critics within the theatrical community, the relief efforts of the FTP were overshadowed by the fear of competition with established theatres. The FTP, with its deep-pocketed government patron, access to numerous out of luck practitioners, and national scope, was poised to establish a new American theatre, one which could reach a new and larger audience. The new theatre, as perceived by threatened critics, made little room for established theatre communities or unions. Thus, to ensure their survival, established theatres and unions turned on the demonized FTP.

The theatre industry undoubtedly suffered from the effects of the Great Depression as the grim economics not only kept audience members out of the seats but also prevented patrons from opening their wallets, which in turn put numerous theatre professionals on the relief rolls. In light of dire circumstances and the inability to provide for their members, the Actors Equity Association was one of the first unions to approach the government about a theatre relief project. In February of 1935, Equity requested a five million dollar grant to "save the theatre, "a dying industry," and to establish six hundred actors and three hundred and fifty stage hands with touring groups across the nation. With that loan denied, the Legitimate Theatre Code Authority pleaded on June 5, 1935 for a three million dollar loan from which would be repaid from the touring companies' ticket sales. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration [FERA] answered the call on June 12, providing funds for the Code Authority's touring companies. William Brady, the head of the Code Authority, justified FERA's actions, explaining that "The government is helping all other businesses, and no business is in worse shape than the theatre."

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In the face of mass unemployment, the foundation of the Federal Theatre should have been a welcome relief for unions and professionals. However, the established theatre community of New York was wary of the FTP. Producers worried that the poor quality of relief roll actors combined with the seemingly bottomless pockets of the FTP's government patron would lead to disaster for independent professional theatre. After all, "if [FTP productions] did not conform to Broadway standards, [they] would subsequently discourage attendance at the professional theatre. It was contended also that the admission fees charged for these productions would injure the box offices of the regular commercial theatres." While the FTP was able to lease some theatres, the project faced serious backlash if it trespassed into Broadway's territory. When the project attempted to lease the St. James Theatre on West 44th Street, producers retaliated with a petition demanding that the FTP vacate the theatre. The producers claimed that the project had agreed, "that only theatres south of Forty-second Street and north of Fifty-second would be used by it to avoid conflict with the professional theatre."

While Broadway producers scrutinized the artistic activities and infringements of the FTP, theatrical unions closely monitored the project's employees. The Actors Equity association, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the Chorus Equity Association, and even the International Ladies Garment Workers Union saw great importance in the activities of NYC's unit. After all, it was the unions' job to protect their out of work members, not the government's. For Paul Edwards, the administrator of the New York project, the FTP's relationship with theatre labor unions and the loyalties within became tantamount. He instructed all employees of the New York unit that "Union delegations will be received only by myself or by persons designated by me in this office or on individual projects, and all such representatives will report directly to me on matter of labor relationships." The exclusivity demanded by Edwards allowed him and his selected peers to control the official position and image of the unit. After all, if any of the unions felt that their concerns were not addressed or honored, they could forbid their current members from participating in FTP activities. Such an action would cut off the FTP from their skilled work force, or indi-

viduals who could train the unemployed into a skilled work force. Edwards's concern with the FTP's appearance to the labor unions was not a paranoid but a needed action. Edwards also limited his unit's contact with the WPA and members of Congress to himself and other trusted administrators with a similar memorandum. These limitations of outside access to the project allowed Edwards control over the image of the project. Such control was a necessary limitation in light of Roosevelt's Recession and federal cutbacks in 1937. If the project appeared successful, well-run, and theatrically interesting, it was less likely to incur further personnel cuts.

However, existing union influence within the FTP proved problematic for Edwards. The strong union presences in the city and within the members of the NYC unit lead to conflicting loyalties. This conflict even showed up on paper, as employees used labor insignias in their correspondence and FTP publications. A disapproving Edwards ordered his employees "This practice of lettering must be immediately discontinued, and official correspondence and publications may carry only such reference as may be necessary to identify the individual or department by which released." This order echoed Edward's concern with federal correspondence as the logo of a labor union on an FTP document presented the project as weak, as if it needed the assistance of the unions to stay running. Edwards's need to have a unified front in New York's FTP units translated itself into fights over improper insignias on paper.

Hostile union activity was not limited only to the FTP. During the New Deal, all types of workers unionized, from white collar office workers to members of the relief rolls. For instance, the American Federation of Government Employees [AFGE] organized and protected employees within the administrative branches of the WPA. As administrative workers were no safer from personnel cuts than an actor or carpenter, WPA lodges within AFGE protested cuts and decried the lack of seniority rights for workers and outside hiring with a similar style. Despite the vitriol of union protests and memos, relationships between various labor unions and the government projects during the New Deal were generally positive and cooperative. Such positive relationships grew not only from FTP respect for the unions, but from their attempts to clearly define their expectations of

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professional employees and procedures for dismissal. A professional worker within the FTP was one who "for a minimum of fifty weeks out of ten years has earned his living in some recognized theatre activity." To appease unions, as well as to ensure the quality of FTP productions and professional theatrical workers were assured that they would receive the greatest consideration in the event of personnel cuts, although they could not be held exempt. Non-theatrical personnel, whom mostly served necessary administrative functions, would be scrutinized and downsized to the smallest efficient group, presumably to make room for theatrical professionals. It is interesting to note that these definite standards of employment and termination for FTP workers were made uniform in 1939, and distributed to the heads of numerous theatrical unions. As the project faced national cuts, the WPA ordered the New York City projects alone to eliminate one thousand workers while clear expectations of and cooperation with unions ensured that the projects would have continued support from unions and their members at a time when such support was scarce.

Unhappy Audiences: Seattle and Standards of Decency

While critics kept their eyes on the FTP at a national level, local units had the dual task of pleasing both the greater FTP organization and the artistic sensibilities of their communities. The uneven level of FTP activity throughout the nation reflected these tensions. In some states, no or very few theatre professionals were found; while Virginia scrounged up a dozen people for their relief rolls, Montana's roster was completely empty. And as WPA regulation prevented workers from transferring from the area where they first applied for relief, the likelihood of having a successful unit in areas without theatre professionals was slim to none. On the other hand, areas with higher concentrations of theatre professionals and an established artistic community —, such as the metropolitan cities of New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, could count on highly active and very visible FTP units. However, smaller cities or towns outside of metropolitan areas were able to support vibrant FTP units as well, with or without critics being pleased.

The FTP unit based in Seattle, Washington, was regarded by its contemporaries as one of the most successful in the project. The Seattle FTP produced Living Newspapers, toured Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] camps with a vaudeville troupe, and produced shows of local importance. As the FTP began to take shape in 1935, Flanagan tapped Glenn Hughes, the director of the University of Washington's drama department, to serve as the Northwestern Regional Director. Hughes, knowing that few professional theatre practitioners existed in the Northwest, created his plan around numerous neighborhood community theatres. The theatres would be housed in found spaces, and perform royalty-free or low cost plays with new productions every five months, charging twenty-five to fifty cents for admission. His plan allotted for companies of thirty-two relief personnel working alongside unpaid student volunteers and non-relief actors whom would account for less than fifty percent. As Hughes attempted to put his plan into action, he was met with numerous obstacles. When he announced his planned network of theatres in January 1936, the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of the North West sent their representatives to complain to the state WPA director George Gannon, fearing that the competition of low-priced or free theatre would harm their businesses. Gannon himself held little respect for the goals of any Federal One project, informing Hughes that "we would accomplish our purpose of fitting the relief people for gainful work in private industry by expanding our efforts in teaching these persons who classify themselves as actors, some clerical work such as typing filing and general office work." However, the Seattle FTP overcame local opposition and began rehearsals in the middle of January 1936, and were touring CCC camps and performing throughout the city by February. By September 1936, though, the unit experienced its first real crisis with their Negro unit and its production of *Lysistrata*.

The Negro Unit of the Seattle FTP formed organically within the first year of the FTP's existence. Hughes never mentioned it in his original plan for Northwestern theatre, nor was it an FTP priority. The unit's formation began in 1933, when Seattle's Repertory Theatre added members of the Negro AME church to their production of *In Abrahams Bosom*. As the FTP established itself in Seattle, the producers of the Repertory Theatre, James

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Burton and Florence James, formed the unit both to employ African Americans and to prove their commitment to civil rights. The unit eventually employed sixty relief workers, and mounted its first show, *Noah*, on April 27, 1936 to mixed reviews and with an amateur aesthetic. Hoping to refute critics, the unit chose their next production with care. In *Lysistrata*, the unit found a classic play well within the standards of high art, a perfect chance to please critics.

Lysistrata was the final play in the Greek comedic playwright Aristophanes' *War and Peace* trilogy; first performed in 411 BCE, it fell well outside of copyright law. In the play, the city-state of Athens begins its twenty-first year of war and peace is unlikely. Desperate, the heroine *Lysistrata* leads the women of Athens in a ploy for peace. To stop the war, *Lysistrata* commands that the women must not engage in any sexual contact with the men of Athens until peace is reached. The celibate women storm the Acropolis and seize the treasury to expedite the process of peace, which is happily reached by the end of the play. Unit member Theodore Brown adapted the comedic script, placing the action in *Ethiopia* to capitalize on the ongoing crisis and included three Negro spirituals in the body of the play. The program notes proclaimed "Anachronisms we throw to the winds. True art is universal and timeless in its human implications."

Lysistrata opened to a sold-out house and enthusiastic audience support on September 17, 1936. Local papers such as The Seattle Star beamed "*Lysistrata* Has Charm And Gayity," and that "The play is another splendid example of the way in which people have been rehabilitated thru being given a chance to do creative work." Despite positive press, the James were called to a meeting with the state WPA head Don Able on September 18th and officially ordered via letter "You are hereby directed not to continue with the production '*Lysistrata*' [sic] any further for the reason that it is for the best interest of the WPA to have it closed." During the meeting, Abel claimed that two members of the opening night audience complained about the content of the 'indecent and bawdy' play to the acting mayor of Seattle, who then passed the messages to Able. However, the FTP did little to reinstate *Lysistrata*. When Howard Miller, one of

Hopkins's assistants at the WPA, visited Seattle and watched a rehearsal of the play in question his reaction was remarkably similar to Abel's condemnation. Miller wrote to Flanagan that the play was "badly cast, badly directed, cheaply costumed," and "offensive only in an adolescent writing on the wall way." Meeting with Abel, Miller was assured that there would be little WPA interference with Seattle's future productions, and *Lysistrata* remained closed after only one performance.

The explanations given for the closing of *Lysistrata* by the WPA, however, were superficial at best. While Able and the WPA claimed that the play's explicit sexual content offended the delicate sensibilities of Seattle, all existing documentation concerning *Lysistrata* points to the unit's attempts to limit such humor. In his vernacular adaptation, Brown's *Lysistrata* transformed the sensual comedy into "a broad farce, with every attempt to play down the sexy and risqué situations of the original." A review in *The Seattle Star* corroborates that "By wisecracks in Aristophanes time this comedy master was thought a bit on the shady side, but now the once ear-burning jokes are harmlessly lightly amusing and brought a healthy, hearty laugh from the audience." The charge of obscene sexually content against *Lysistrata* also loses credibility when contextualized within the contemporary entertainment scene of Seattle where independently-produced burlesque and other similar strip shows enjoyed open popularity and promotion without criticism for the sake of decency. Ads for shows and burlesque films, which featured frontal views of nearly nude women and headlines such as "I'm coming... with 3 score other lovelies to the Paramount," ran before, during, and after *Lysistrata*'s brief appearance. The WPA's superficial standard of decency, as well as the FTP's overall complacency with the unstated censorship, has lead historians, such as Ron West, to charge both organizations with overt racism. As West argued "the Seattle incident strongly suggests that the NRC's (Negro Repertory Company) white sponsors projected their academic and political agendas onto the black unit. By doing so, local and national sponsors increased the perceived threat to entrenched conservative forces, but the black performers suffered the repressive consequences." Conditioned by previous performances, conservatives in Seattle expected the African American cast to honor well-developed white caricatures.

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However, when confronted with African Americans in independent positions of power, the conservatives perceived a threat to Seattle's social order and their own dominance, leading to the closing of the play. While the closing of *Lysistrata* was racially motivated, the bigotry that characterized the controversy was atypical of the project. African Americans were involved in all aspects of the FTP throughout its operations, establishing twenty-two Negro theatres throughout the county and showed "to white America the essential humanity of its black citizenry."

When contextualized within the conflict of art and relief, the charge of racism becomes a symptom of administrative tension, both in Seattle and beyond. Regardless of motivation, Abel's authority as state WPA head and purse-string holder allowed him to close *Lysistrata* the relief project and thus *Lysistrata* the play by proxy. The FTP's decision to 'bury it' rather than use press generated by the controversy to gain support for *Lysistrata* and its reopening then becomes political strategy versus artistic statement. As evident in the lost political battle over *Lysistrata*, the FTP hoped to survive similar political battles. If the project could survive, it could continue to create art.

Economic Cuts and Artist Protest

From the founding of the Federal Theatre, securing enough money for the project's survival proved to be a constant issue. Critics claimed that the "boondoggle" wasted needed public funds, using the money in question to fund all types of propaganda without practical value. The members of the FTP, however, remained invested in the project no matter its financial state. As Flanagan quipped to critics decrying the six million dollars set aside for actor salaries "surely this is not exorbitant for six or nine months of creative effort from which the community benefits. It has been estimated that it costs more to blow a man to pieces in the trenches."

However critics of the New Deal claimed that the entire WPA was a "boondoggle," asserting that the organization spent money wasteful, despite the renovations of one hundred thousand public buildings, the laying of one hundred twenty-one thousand

miles of road, and the two hundred seventeen thousand acres of farmland saved from erosion. "White collar projects," such as the FTP and other arts projects, received the brunt of the critic's ire as propaganda and waste. In light of criticism against the project, the first FTP cuts began after FDR's successful reelection bid in November 1936. While the cuts saved some money, they served mainly as a peace offering to the staunchest opponents of the New Deal, and demonstrated that the administration could compromise. While an uneasy peace was achieved between critics and supporters of the New Deal, forces beyond the control of the FTP endeavored to wreck it.

From its beginnings in 1934 through the middle of 1937, New Deal economic policy focused mainly on putting people back to work, not operating on a balanced budget. As economic recovery continued, President Roosevelt and his White House began employing a more conservative fiscal policy. The main goals included the reduction of federal debt, which had risen to forty percent of the Gross Domestic Product in 1940 as compared to sixteen percent in 1929, and to place government operations back within a balanced budget. However well intentioned, the effects of Roosevelt's policy change were far more negative than anticipated and during the recession, employment rates decreased by twenty-two percent, industrial output fell by thirty-two percent, and the price of stocks lost forty percent of their previous worth. For the projects of Federal One, the 1937 recession led to greater scrutiny and louder critics decrying the "boondoggling" nature of the projects themselves.

On May 27, 1937, and in the wake of rumored personnel cuts, an estimated twenty-thousand WPA workers in New York City engaged in a one-day city-wide stoppage of all WPA activities. The stated goal of the workers, whose numbers included seven thousand members of the city's arts projects, was to convince Congress that the federal relief appropriations for 1938 should be doubled to three billion dollars, as opposed to the one billion, five hundred million approved by the House. In accordance with the peaceful stoppage, all FTP theatres were dark for the day without incident. As Flanagan explained "whatever we think of their [the strikers] method, we must inquire into the reasons for the protest...They realize that if they are

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dropped from the rolls they must go back to destitution.”

By June, however, workers' fear of destitution was no longer unfounded. On June 10, 1937, orders came to New York from Washington that two-thousand, eight hundred and forty eight workers from the WPA arts projects be terminated from relief rolls effective July 15. For the FTP, that meant eliminating one thousand, seven hundred and nine workers, thirty percent of their workforce. The estimated impact of the lost workers included the closing of two of the seven FTP theatres in the city, and a limited forty play season when compared to the eighty-seven produced in 1937. In May, the specter of cuts stopped WPA work for a day. When the cuts were announced on June 22, however, the subsequent protests reached an almost hysterical level. Eight hundred workers engaged in sit down strikes and picket lines throughout the city, disrupting both office work and musical performances. Loosely-organized groups stormed and occupied the office of WPA administrator William Farnsworth for five hours, and left only when Farnsworth called Harry Hopkins to repeal the dismissals. Eighteen men and women occupied the Federal Music Theatre on a hunger strike for six days, protesting the unfair termination of five WPA dancers. Fifty workers captured the third floor of the WPA Arts administration building, delaying the preparation of four-thousand, four hundred pay checks to “raise so much hell in Washington that the WPA would have to rescind the 1,109 dismissal slips given out on the arts projects,” no matter the human suffering. The culmination of the protests occurred as six hundred WPA employees seized the office of WPA arts administrator Harold Stein, holding him within his office until Stein conceded to their demands. The main goal of the protestors, in addition to the reversal of Washington's ordered cuts, was the establishment of an appeals board to review the two thousand dismissals. Stein was able to buy his freedom fifteen hours into his captivity by promising the strikers he would honor their demands to the limit of his authority. While the workers claimed victory and that Congress “cannot get away with such monkeyshines and shenanigans as it tried” when reducing personnel, workers had very little to celebrate. As the orders for the personnel cut had originated in Washington, there was very little administrators at the local level could do. In addition, the funds

required to maintain the projects' employment levels simply did not exist.

The passionate protests in June 1937 were the largest in the FTP, spurred on by two main factors, the end of relief and the possibility of personal hardship. The largest cut to the WPA workforce to date, especially to the FTP, the personnel reduction put the impermanence of the program into stark relief for project members. When faced with termination, FTP workers attempted to take action, either against the opposing government or against themselves. After receiving pink slips, two workers named typist Lillian Swartz and office worker Minnie Wallenstein, attempted to commit suicide by throwing themselves out of their office windows, but were thwarted in both cases by other workers. The cuts and subsequent protests, when placed within the context of the 1937 recession, manifest the dependence that all workers had on both the WPA and the FTP. To be on the relief roll, while not the most glamorous position, guaranteed both work and personal security in the midst of chaos. The concern over those on relief consumed the project throughout its operation. As a very disgruntled actor condemned Flanagan in 1939, "your Fedral-theater [sic] has to many fake actors on payroll... These FAKERS should be replaced by legitmate [sic] actors & actresses needing work. It's your duty, to check up on these fakes before trade papers get report. You were warned."

Public Money and Private Propaganda

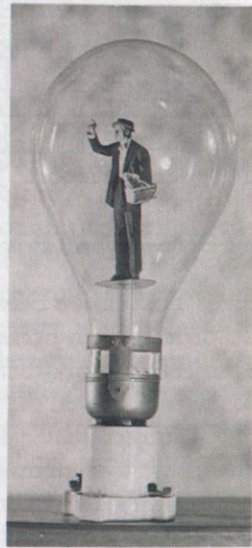
The tension between public money and private politics surfaced on numerous occasions throughout the life of the FTP. While the project was not officially bound by censorship, the government funds which allowed the project to operate did place certain limitations on subject matter: In the case of *Ethiopia*, the WPA pulled the purse strings when it disagreed with the theoretical portrayal of foreign heads of state. In order to keep the funds flowing both for the arts and relief, FTP units throughout the nation attempted to balance between artistic autonomy and not offending their national patron. One sanctioned way to supplement government funding for FTP units was to secure local sponsorship. Sponsors could include church groups, theatre companies, and even private corporations.

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Back in Seattle in 1937, the local FTP unit found a supportive sponsor in City Light, a local public utilities company. In the unit's planned production of *Power*, City Light saw a great opportunity for political propaganda in the shape of culture and art. The Living Newspaper *Power* focused on the private ownership of electrical utilities and raised a rallying call for rightful public ownership. While the original March 1937 production of *Power* in New York City glorified the Tennessee Valley Authority's fight against private utilities, the conflict between City Light and the private Puget Power took center stage. Rivals for the hearts and power lines of Seattle, Puget ran fifteen hundred miles of electrical lines, while City Light ran twenty one hundred.

With the goal of out-publicizing Puget Power, City Light utility sponsored *Power*, and in return the FTP "adapted [*Power*] to the local scheme of things and they are working into the script the public ownership theme." To gain maximum exposure for the Living Newspaper, City Light and other public institutions created Power Week, which plastered Seattle with publicity from June 21 through the 26. Mayor John Dore himself pontificated that, "In the State of Washington lies the electric power that is to control the destiny of this new civilization; an energy to be used for the benefit of all." Power Week included an elaborate newspaper campaign with 750 inches of column devoted to the Living Newspaper, radio advertisements and dramatic programs about the issue on time paid for by City Light, publicity featuring new trick photographs such as the one pictured to the right, and other similar grandstanding. When the delayed production opened on July 6, 1937 it was met with packed houses, excellent publicity, and glowing reports sent to Washington. During its five night run, *Power* earned the Seattle FTP four thousand dollars, selling out the theatre with 25¢ and 40¢ tickets. Reviews for the production, however, were mixed: The Seattle Times bellowed that the play was "as fine a piece of propa-



ganda as ever trod the boards on the 'legit' stage... the play has the subtlety of a sledgehammer and the restraint of a ground swell." Liberal leaning papers, on the other hand, found the play a sensational hit for the Seattle FTP. The Public Service Journal beamed "If ever a consumer of electricity was bewildered, bedraggles and "be-hanged" he was this shown in this week's production of 'Power'... They get, in simple abbreviated form in two hours what might take months to understand otherwise." City Light also benefited greatly from the FTP's support and propaganda: when the utility began to campaign for a takeover of Puget Power in December of 1937, it enjoyed full support of the press and public opinion.

Undoubtedly, City Light's sponsorship of *Power* benefited both the utility and the FTP: The funds given by City Light supplemented the unit's meager production and publicity budgets, while City Light enjoyed a criticism-free glorification of public utilities such as itself. While there was a level of conservative backlash to the propaganda, the Seattle unit escaped violent protests with one of their most successful productions. After all, everyone could benefit from lower electricity rates.

However, political messages did not always go over as smoothly within the FTP, as even children's theatre was not immune from controversy. In May 1937, the Children's unit of the New York City FTP produced *The Revolt of the Beavers*. Part musical and part socially conscious drama, *Revolt* chronicled the journey of Paul and Mary, a poor pair of working-class siblings who were transported from an unnamed city to the forests of Beaverland by Old Man Wind. Beaverland, however, proved no more idyllic than the city the children left. All of the beavers of Beaverland were forced by the wealthy 'Chief' and his police force to turn the Busy-Busy wheels, which transformed bark into food and clothing. The fruits of the beavers' labors, however, were hoarded by the Chief. As the beavers sing, "so, we're poor, unhappy beavers, / working busy as the bees, / while he sits and pulls the levers / and gets fatter, if you please!" With the help of the siblings and the Professor beaver, a young beaver named Oakleaf rallied all the beavers to overthrow the Chief's regime, as pictured above. Disguised as a polar bear who wanted to replicate the wheels in the North Pole, Oakleaf tricked the

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Chief into letting him destroy the wheel and overthrow his regime. Successful in their revolt, the beavers of Beaverland banished the Chief and happily establish a society where goods were shared equally. The whimsical script and music by Oscar Saul and Lou Lantz, while undoubtedly child-friendly in technique and encouraging independence from bullies, carried a far more adult message of political action in the face of unfair treatment.



Figure 9: The beavers plan their revolt under Oakleaf's flag.

Contemporary critics of the FTP certainly did not miss the revolutionary message of *The Revolt of the Beavers*. Criticism ranged from superficial to demonizing. Douglas Gilbert sniffed that "It was disappointing - an unclever production for which the Federal Theatre deserves no credit... the piece is so devoid of imagination, charm and sensitivity I could endure only one act," in *The World Telegram*. While *Revolt* failed to impress Gilbert stylistically, other critics found the play much more troubling in terms of content. The editors of *The Saturday Evening Post* in Philadelphia warned that "the Adelphi Theatre is not in Moscow but on Fifty-fourth Street, New York, and that the Federal Theatre Project is a division of Harry Hopkins' WPA, operated by the Federal Government... and paid for out of

relief funds voted by Congress.” The administrators of the NYC Juvenile Aid Bureau rejected fourteen hundred free tickets to *Revolt*, and returned them to the WPA due to the radical political content of the play. Even Brooks Atkinson, the influential dram critic of *The New York Times* who was generally supportive of FTP productions, had little praise for the play, and insinuated “the newest adventure of the WPA theatre ought to improve our diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.” To critics, *Revolt* served not as a battle cry for class struggle, but a warning sign of the Communist sympathies of the FTP and its attempts to brainwash their audiences with the same ideology.

During the meantime, New York schoolchildren filled the Adelphi Theatre for the four weekly matinees of *Revolt's* month-long run, theoretically exposing themselves to the degenerating ideas of radical labor. The indoctrination, however, did not always take. The colorful set, the fantasy-driven costumes and makeup, and the slapstick humor often overshadowed the political message of *Revolt*. One Brooklyn child declared after the show that “I liked the Chief because he made me laugh but I didn’t like the way he treated the beavers,” hardly the statement of a newly minted political radical. Such audience reactions were typical of the political theatre of the 1930s as productions hid their politics in the candy coating of vernacular approaches, hoping to “stimulate political action by eliciting the audience’s identificatory pleasures in the political”. As theorist Ilka Saal argued, vernacular theatre techniques included appeals to emotions over reason, and framing political struggles as moral crises: while such techniques would reach an audience, they often overshadowed the political messages which they were supposed to take to heart.

In the cases of *Power* and *The Revolt of the Beavers*, controversy occurred not solely because of the content of the respective productions. More pressing was the fact that government funds, which could be spent on a multitude of other useful projects, were used to produce anti-American plays that brainwashed their audiences. In the face of conservative criticism, the liberal politics of the FTP were rarely flagged and often became more radical, producing higher art with relief funds. However, the politics and very nature of

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the FTP as both an arts and relief program created a logical target for the rising tide of anti-New Deal public and political sentiment.

A Rowdy House and the End of the FTP

The accusation of the Federal Theatre as a Communist organization was a common theme throughout criticism of the Project. From the beginning of the project, groups such as the Federal Theater Veterans League dedicated themselves to the eradication of any communist influence within the organization. As the league claimed "We have no complaints, no axe to grind. We want to fight the minor party if the Communist that is endeavoring to undermine every WPA unit set up." Other critics, such as conservative Pennsylvanian Senator James J. Davis, attacked the project with less honest intentions. Davis, despite his previous involvement in the arts, asserted the project used "American money to spread communistic propaganda in this country, through the theatre or otherwise." The main point of contention in Davis's critique, however, was Flanagan's 1931 book *Shifting Scenes*. While the book discussed the trends in contemporary European theatre as a whole, the theatres of the Soviet Union received the majority of Flanagan's attention. As the fear of Communism grew throughout the nation, a mere mention of anything related to Russia would bring accusation of Communist sympathies and even activities. Flanagan brushed off the criticism, assuring her critics that "a large majority of our plays are classical or are American material by American authors," and thus could not hold any sympathies for the Communist party.

After Roosevelt's recession in 1937, the anxiety levels within the United States seemed to be at a breaking point. While an individual could not label the principles of free market economics as a physical enemy, Communists became the greatest threat to American life. As such, The House Committee on Un-American Activities began with honest intentions. In May of 1930, documents were presented to Congress alleging that the Soviet Amtorg Trading Corporation had been distributing Communist Propaganda throughout the United States. An alarmed Congress passed a resolution allowing any investigation of "all entities, groups or individuals who are alleged to advise, teach or advocate the overthrow by force or violence

of the government of the United States, or attempt to undermine our republican form of government by inciting riots, sabotage, or revolutionary disorders." From this broad base, the Committee was officially formed in July 1938 to investigate any person, organization, or idea considered "un-American."

Within weeks of its formation, the Committee found its first target in the FTP. Representative J. Parnell Thomas, a Republican from New Jersey, drew the first blood on a very public attack on the FTP. Thomas claimed, among other things, that "the Federal Theatre Project not only is serving as a branch of the communistic organization but also is one more link in the vast and unparalleled New Deal Propaganda machine," and that it "seemingly is infested with radicals from top to bottom." Thomas also portrayed Flanagan as a Communist, citing *Shifting Scenes* as his main point of evidence. Above all, Thomas promised that she would be forced to testify before the Committee in August. A seething Flanagan prepared her own press release in response to the accusations, but was reprimanded by the WPA information division in D.C. who were the only individuals allowed to formally answer the press. Flanagan's brief response, in which she rightly asserted that Thomas's charges were "obviously absurd," was buried in the back of the paper the next day. With the FTP's voice drowned out by the larger personalities of the Committee, its members enjoyed numerous field days in the press and in their hearings, smearing the project with as much red paint as they could get their hands on. One sensational headline in *The New York Times* shrieked that "WPA Witness Says Soviet Trained Him In Street Fighting; Workers Alliance Organized 'Hunger March' on Capital, Committee Hears Tells Of Stay In Moscow Ex-Communists at House Inquiry Charge Reds Seek to Stir Unrest Among Jobless." Similar stories and articles filled the presses and hearings without a FTP voice to defend itself. When the Committee began its investigations in August 1938, it relied mainly on the testimony of Hazel Huffman, a former FTP mailroom clerk uninvolved with any artistic activities of the project. Huffman asserted in her convoluted testimony that the FTP only existed to create Communist propaganda. As such, Huffman claimed Flanagan and other administrators would "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

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to make it propoganda for the purpose of arousing the masses, for the purpose of creating a Soviet America." While Huffman and other Committee witnesses painted the project red, the FTP's attempts to refute the numerous false claims fell on deaf ears. As 1938 drew to a close, the WPA arranged for both Flanagan and WPA administrator Helen Woodward to present briefs of explanation to the Committee.

Woodward's brief, however, failed to make any impression on Committee or repudiate any of their false claims. During her hearing, Woodward was unable to answer technical questions about the FTP, due to her involvement with its day to day activities. When Woodward honestly asked if any of the committee members had read the plays which they were condemning, she was viciously attacked by indignant committee members. Flanagan's December 1938 testimony, while far more knowledgeable than Woodward's attempt, was focused far more on personal politics than the activities of the project. Both *Shifting Scenes* and "A Theatre is Born," an article by Flanagan published in Theatre Arts Monthly concerning the growth of workers' theatre in the Unites States, served as the smoking gun of communism for the Committee. As Flanagan wrote both works, the Committee asserted "you are the protagonist for this new theatre. Isn't that correct?" The lack of theatrical knowledge within the Committee was striking. During the testimony, Rep. Joe Starnes of Alabama asked Flanagan if the long-dead Christopher Marlow was a Communist. Flanagan was also barred from finishing her testimony by a suspiciously placed lunch break and her remaining testimony was not included in the transcript of the hearing as promised by the Committee secretary, nor was the brief distributed intact to the members of the Senate and House as promised by WPA representatives. The final report of the Committee released on January 3, 1939 concerning both the Writer's Project and the FTP simply stated of the latter:

We are convinced that a rather large number of the employees of the Federal Theatre Project are either members of the Communist Party or are sympathetic with the Communist Party. It is also clear that certain employees felt under compulsion

to join the Worker's Alliance in order to retain their jobs.

The above paragraph sounded the death knell for the FTP. No matter how many excellent plays were staged or briefs made public, the project was falsely labeled as communist and a danger to civilized society.

The repercussions of Flanagan's unsuccessful testimony were quickly felt by the Federal Theatre. On December 10, 1938, Washington ordered the New York units of Federal One to cut a total of one thousand five hundred employees from the eight thousand five hundred current projects. The FTP was specifically ordered to cut one thousand workers, which constituted twenty three and a half percent of its work force. The other projects also faced less severe cuts, with the Arts and Music project losing five and fourteen percent of their employees respectively. As Willis Morgan of the vilified Worker's Alliance noted, "the Administration is quite obviously backing water in the face of the attack of the Dies Committee and others." The FTP existed in a limbo state in 1939. Administrators obeyed the cuts, minded increased public scrutiny, and continued to produce plays even as the future of the project remained unsure. On June 30, 1939, Congress passed the 1940 Relief Bill, legislation that drastically altered the structure of the WPA. The organization was renamed the Work Progress Administration, strict limits were placed on the hours and wages of WPA employees, and local communities were now required to fund twenty-five percent of their WPA projects. In Congress's trimming of the New Deal fat, the Federal Theatre Project was eliminated as of July 1, 1939, with enough funds remaining to pay administrative and other workers through July and October respectively.

At the end of the United States' greatest experiment in national theatre, the project had cost the government forty-four million dollars; it employed eleven thousand eight hundred and fifty five workers; performed for twenty nine million, one hundred and fifty two thousand, one hundred and fifty seven patrons, seventy five percent of which were admitted for free; and performed sixty thousand, five hundred and seventy times. The total box office receipts for the

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project consisted of four point three percent of its cost.

Curtain Call

It is easy to view the brief life of the Federal Theatre Project as one characterized by failure. While the project produced some critical successes, such as *Voodoo Macbeth* and *Prologue to Glory*, it was also plagued by scandals. Some scandals originated from controversial artistic choices, such as the empowerment of African-American women in a tame *Lysistrata* in Seattle. Economic issues followed every cut or addition of personnel to the FTP, as critics claimed it was full of communists and actors raged that it was filled with fakes. Clashes of politics produced other scandals, such as the child-friendly class warfare featured in *The Revolt of the Beavers* and subsequent boycotts of the production. These forces alone would be enough to complicate any project, not only a decentralized national theatre attempting to operate in the middle of a depression.

The other arts projects of Federal One were not immune to scandals either. The Federal Writers Project, which employed authors to pen comprehensive guidebooks for every state of the union, was just as large a target for anti-New Deal critics as the FTP. Also labeled as a Communist propaganda machine, the Writers Project faced personnel cuts and House Un-American Activities Committee investigations of equal severity. The Music and Art projects generally enjoyed popular support in their endeavors, but were often lumped with the Theatre and Writer's projects as a "boondoggle." While the FTP was the only project of Federal One terminated on with the 1940 Relief Bill, the remaining three dodged the furor of the House of Representatives and scraped by with a budget of eleven-million dollars, less than one percent of the bill's total allocations. However, by the end of July, the government distributed General Letter #278, which stripped the Federal Art, Music, and Writers projects of their Federal sponsorship and forced them to seek sponsors within their own states. The renamed Works Progress Administration Arts Projects continued their limited existence for four years, until the termination of the WPA in the face of World War Two in 1943. While disheartening to artists and their supporters, the fate of all the arts projects of the FTP is not atypical in the greater history of art

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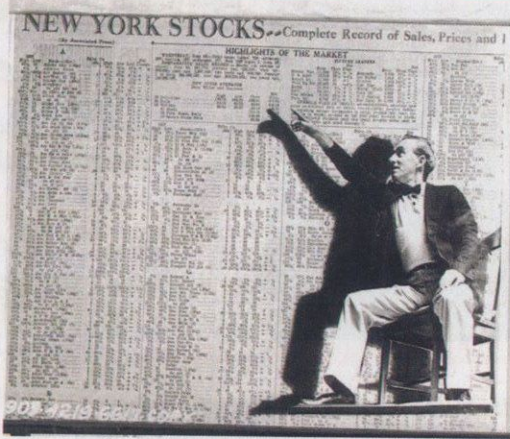


FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT ADMINISTRATION MAY 1936

	: Harry Hopkins :
	: Adm. of WPA :
: Bureau of Research and :	: Jacob Baker :
: Publication :	: Asst. Adm. :
: Rosamond Gilder, Dir. :	: of WPA :
: :	: :
: Kate Drain Lawson :	: Hallie :
: Dir. Fall 1936 :	: Flanagan :
: :	: Nat'l. Dir. :
: :	: :
: :	: William :
: :	: Farnsworth :
: :	: Deputy Dir. :
: :	: A.A. in D.C. :

Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V
H. Motherwell (Jan-Apr)		J. McGee	T.W. Stevens (until May 13)	J.H. Miller, Asst. to Fed. Dir.
W. Stahl (April)		F. Koch, Reg. Adv.	E.C. Mabie, Reg. Adv.	G. Hughes, Reg. Adv.
CT: G. Don Dero	DE: E. Porter, A.A.	AL: V. Haldene	IL: E.K. Davis, St. Dir.	CA: G. Brown, St. Dir.
MA: L. Gallagher	J. Zerbe, Proj. Sup.	AR: J. McGee, Asst to Fed. Dir.	G. Kondolf, Dir, Chicago	CO: K. Tillman, Proj. Sup.
ME: A. Hickey	DC: E. Porter	FL: D. Lynch, St. Dir.	IO: C.W. Jeffries, Proj. Sup.	OR: B. Whitecomb, St. Sup.
NH: A. Snow	IN: L. Nouvelle, St. Dir.	LA: B. Szard, Proj. Sup.	MS: W.R. Perry, Proj. Sup.	WA: G. Williams, St. Dir.
J.B. Mack	NJ: H. Schoeni, Spec. Rep.	OK: J. Dunn, St. Dir.	NE: A. Howell, St. Dir.	
NY: G. Gots, St. Dir.	OH: L.E. Lang, St. Dir.	NC: M. Dimberger, St. Dir.	E. Strong, Proj. Sup.	
G. Patmerton, Asst. St. Dir.	PA: L.J. Howard, St. Dir. after J. Décter	TX: C. Meredith, St. Dir.	O. Lieben, Proj. Sup.	
NYCP: Barber				
RI: J. Hughes				

Figure 2: This chart shows the FTP administration after the combination of the thirteen regions. While this combination undoubtedly simplified paperwork, it also created closer project supervision: with the current structure, only five individuals were charged with overseeing local units, as opposed to the thirteen previous supervisors.



Figures 5 and 6: Two trick photographs used in the publicity materials and lobby displays for *Power*. In both images the men are superimposed in front of stocks, creating the thematic conflict between people and profits at the Living Newspaper's center.



Figure 7: The front of the Metropolitan theatre during the run of *Power*. The street display in the “class” theatre district” included transformers loaned from the local light plant and signs specially built by members of the local WPA.

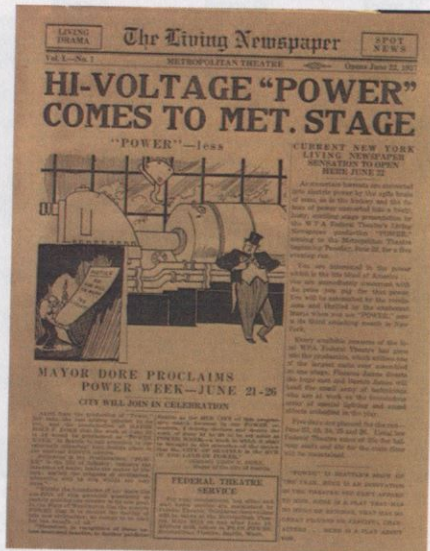


Figure 8: A promotional mailer for Seattle’s 1937 production of *Power*. With the help of City Light, the FTP printed five thousand copies which were distributed throughout the city, a project nearly impossible with only ten percent of their funds available for non-wage costs. Undoubtedly, the sponsorship and funds of City Light made such feats possible.

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