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**Dance in the political arena: The Federal Dance Project and
Helen Tamiris**

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San Jose State University, 1992

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DANCE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA:
THE FEDERAL DANCE PROJECT AND
HELEN TAMIRIS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Luba Markoff
August, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

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ABSTRACT

DANCE IN THE POLITICAL ARENA: THE FEDERAL DANCE PROJECT AND HELEN TAMIRIS

by Luba Markoff

This thesis addresses the relationship between the American government and dance during the Depression. Tamiris played a pivotal role in this relationship. The study examines Tamiris' role in the creation and sustaining of the Federal Dance Project. The study also examines available biographical information on Tamiris.

Research on this subject reveals that Tamiris' tenacity was instrumental in the creation of the Federal Dance Project. The Federal Theatre Project had ultimate responsibility over the Dance Project and Tamiris' beliefs were in tune with the Theatre Project's Director, Hallie Flanagan. Initially the government was willing to allow Flanagan and Tamiris to act upon their beliefs. When the Theatre Project became a political liability, government severed its relationship with it. The battle for government support of dance and theatre taught artists that they must be united within and outside their fields. Tamiris played a large part in helping her field realize the power and potential of organization.

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INTRODUCTION

Helen Becker took the name "Tamiris" after an "Amazonian Persian Queen who was famed for her beauty and bravery. She led her own troops to battle and carried the head of a king whom she had vanquished in battle, pickled in a barrel of wine--as a trophy--wherever she went" (Tamiris 1989-90; 21). This is a very apt description of Helen Tamiris, a beautiful woman who was not afraid, even eager, to battle for what she believed in. This study investigates Tamiris' battle for federal funding of dance during the Great Depression.

Tamiris was a dancer and choreographer and most importantly a very articulate and active spokesperson for dance and for public support of dance. A strong believer in cooperative action, she was involved in a number of dance organizations that promoted the economic betterment of dancers. During the 1930's Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal provided government support for the arts through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Initially there were four arts divisions in the WPA: theatre, music, art and writing. Due in large part to the efforts of Tamiris, dance became the fifth art division supported by the WPA. Thus began the history of federal support of dance in America.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The relationship between the American government and

dance began during the Depression and Helen Tamiris played a pivotal role in this relationship. This study examines Tamiris' role in the creation and sustaining of the Federal Dance Project. Tamiris' theories and action with regard to federal support of the arts are interpreted and compared with the actions or lack of actions of the federal government. Through interpretation and comparison of Tamiris' theories and actions to the government's conduct, the importance of Tamiris' beliefs and work emerges.

DELIMITATIONS

Helen Tamiris was first and foremost a dancer and choreographer, but this study will concentrate on Helen Tamiris as an advocate on behalf of government support of dance. It must be kept in mind, however, that Tamiris was one of the main choreographers in the Federal Dance Project and one of the most prolific, and that it is difficult to separate the artist from the advocate. Tamiris' artistic sensibilities can help illuminate her theories about the relationship between dance and government.

In terms of federal support of dance, the study principally examines the government's activities regarding the Federal Dance Theatre (and later the Federal Theatre Project into which the Federal Dance Theatre merged because of budget cuts). While there were Dance Projects in a number of other cities, focus is on the Dance Project in New

York City where Tamiris was active.

The history and demise of the "Fine Arts Bills," which sought to make government support of the arts permanent, is also a subject of research, since dance would have been one of the supported categories and Tamiris strongly supported the Fine Arts Bills.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In light of the current controversies surrounding government support of the arts, a better understanding of the origin of federal subsidies of the arts, in this case dance, could help individuals make more intelligent decisions with regard to their relationship with the government. In addition, an awareness of the perseverance and accomplishments of Helen Tamiris should serve as an inspiration for anyone seriously involved in the arts.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Tamiris' energy and efforts on behalf of dance were prodigious. Unfortunately, Tamiris has not been given as much historical attention as some of her contemporaries, particularly Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey. Only one publication exists that deals solely with Helen Tamiris, the monograph Tamiris: A Chronicle of Her Dance Career, 1927 - 1955 by Christena L. Schlundt and its main purpose is to list all of Tamiris' major appearances and presentations as a choreographer. The actual text is very sparing.

Reference is made to Tamiris in a number of dance histories, but these references are limited to a few pages, if not paragraphs. Daniel Nagrin, Helen Tamiris' former husband, presented a paper titled "Helen Tamiris and the Dance Historians" at the 12th Annual Conference of the Society of Dance History Scholars. In a comparison, Nagrin showed that Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey were referred to in dance texts a great deal more than Tamiris. He further showed how the amount of historical attention to Tamiris has diminished over the years (Nagrin 1989; 32-3). For example, in the dance texts published in the 1960's, Tamiris was discussed in three of eight books, but in the dance texts published in the 1980's Tamiris is discussed in only one of nineteen books.

In his paper, Nagrin explores the reasons for the neglect. Some of the reasons Nagrin proposed is that Tamiris' work attracted only one preserver; Tamiris was too complex to define; she put too much time and energy into unifying modern dancers; most of her innovative work was done before 1940 and she died at age 64 without leaving a codified technique (Nagrin 1989; 33-4).

Marcia B. Siegel, in her book The Shapes of Change: Images of American Dance, also gives various reasons why Tamiris does not receive much credit and attention. Tamiris did not have a codified technique, nor did she have a long-

term school or company to give her work continuity. She was never invited to participate in the summer sessions at Bennington College (Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm and Charles Weidman all participated). The dance summer sessions at Bennington College were important in that students came from all around the country and when they returned home they disseminated the techniques they learned, effectively spreading the popularity of the Bennington teachers. Siegel suspected that:

Tamiris was the victim of subtle snobbery and clannishness among the 'in' modern dancers. She enjoyed life and enjoyed dancing. The clique thought her rather vulgar (1979; 42).

Among dance history texts, one exception to the slighting of Tamiris' work is Margaret Lloyd's The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance. This book devotes a rather lengthy chapter to Helen Tamiris. In addition, the Society of Dance History Scholars, in its first edition of Studies in Dance History (Fall/Winter, 1989-90), published "Tamiris in Her Own Voice: Draft of an Autobiography Transcribed, Edited and Annotated by Daniel Nagrin." Unfortunately, the publication is limited to Tamiris' life through 1928.

The Federal Dance Project (under the auspices of the WPA) also falls into the unfortunate category of historical neglect. A handful of theses/dissertations exist on the history of the Federal Dance Project. The most informative

and thorough dissertation on the history of the creation of the Federal Dance Project is "A History of the Federal Dance Theatre of the Works Progress Administration, 1935 - 1939" by Kathleen Ann Lally. Also helpful is the thesis "An Investigation of Modern Dance Works Sponsored Between 1936 and 1939 by the Works Project Administration Federal Theatre Dance Project" by Mary-Lynn Son Hilton and the thesis "The Dance Project of the Works Progress Administration Federal Theatre: A Description of its Organization, Activities and Accomplishments" by Marian Roet. Marian Roet's thesis was written in the 1940's and her research includes interviews of a number of people involved in the Federal Dance Project. The work of Lally, Hilton and Roet focus on the artistic material the Dance Project produced and analyzed the effect of the Federal Dance Project on dance as an art form. These studies did not analyze the policies and philosophies tied to the Dance Project and how they related to government funding of dance in the 1930's and later.

There is no single book devoted entirely to the Federal Dance Project, and scant mention is made of the Federal Dance Project in dance historical texts. Jack Anderson's Ballet & Modern Dance: A Concise History is so concise it fails to mention the Federal Dance Project. Agnes de Mille's America Dances has two paragraphs on the Federal Dance Project. Prime Movers: The Makers of Modern Dance in

America, by Joseph H. Mazo, has less than a page on the Federal Dance Project.

More information on the Federal Dance Project is found in texts about the Federal Theatre than in dance texts. Hallie Flanagan, the Director of the Federal Theatre Project, wrote Arena: The Story of the Federal Theatre and references to the Dance Project are scattered throughout the book. Free, Adult, Uncensored: The Living History of the Federal Theatre Project, edited by John O'Connor and Lorraine Brown, provides an informative, yet concise, chapter on the Federal Dance Project.

Previous research on the dance community's involvement with the Fine Arts Bills is almost nonexistent, although there are some texts which discuss government and public policy on the support of the arts which include information about the Fine Arts Bills (but do not mention the dance world's reaction to the Bills). In addition, many of these texts dismiss the Fine Arts Bills as unimportant by their lack of attention to the subject. For example, Russell Lynes in The Lively Audience does state that the Federal arts projects and the attempt to make federal support permanent were "a rescue operation that taught some lessons in patronage that were quickly forgotten" (1985; 400), and apparently the lessons were so quickly forgotten that Mr. Lynes fails to enumerate what they were.

Out of necessity, research for this study relies heavily on original sources such as dance publications of that time (Dance and Dance Observer), other magazines and newspapers (particularly The New York Times) of that time, as well as autobiographical and/or biographical information on those involved. Articles by, and interviews, of Helen Tamiris are also available.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

TAMIRIS' FORMATIVE YEARS

Helen Becker (she changed her name to Tamiris sometime in the early 1920's) was born in 1902¹ in New York's lower East Side (Dance Magazine 9/66; 6). She grew up in a tenement house and as evidence of her forthcoming leadership abilities, Tamiris was the leader of her gang in the tenement (Tamiris 1989-90; 5). The experience of growing up in a tenement no doubt profoundly affected Tamiris.

As a child, Helen took interpretative dance classes. When she got older she auditioned as a dancer for the Metropolitan Opera and was accepted even though she did not have ballet training. She danced with the Metropolitan Opera for four seasons. While dancing for the Metropolitan Opera, she became distressed over dancers being overworked. She saw that the singers had a union that protected them from abuse, while the dancers did not, which provoked her sense of fairness. Tamiris gave a speech to the dancers and the next day only sixteen of the forty-three dancers showed up to rehearsal in protest over their employer's abuse (Tamiris 1989-90; 11). It was at this point that Tamiris began to realize that there was power in unity and cooperative action.

After dancing with the Metropolitan Opera, Tamiris

danced in musical revues in night clubs. While dancing in musical revues, Tamiris became more and more disillusioned with the commercial theatre and decided she wanted to perform her own dances (Tamiris 1989-90; 27). Like the other modern dance pioneers, she felt that existing dance mediums did not provide a forum for truly expressing one's self. She continued to work in musical revues to raise money to present her own dance concert.

Tamiris presented her first modern dance concert in 1927. For Tamiris, expressing one's self included the making of "American" dances. In the program for one of her early concerts, Tamiris printed her basic theories regarding dance calling her publication a "Manifest." In part the Manifest stated:

Art is international, but the artist is a product of nationality and his principal duty to himself is to express the spirit of his race (Martin 1963; 160).

Tamiris' spirit of enterprise and sense of fairness represented the best of the American spirit and her work, both as an artist and an advocate, represented this spirit.

In a draft of her autobiography, Tamiris wrote:

My chief concern was not in showing off that I was a good dancer, or a beautiful girl--or that I could wear costumes--but I wanted to address myself to my audience--to talk to them and tell them of those things I knew they knew (1989-90; 42).

Tamiris hoped, if not believed, that all Americans were

determined, with a sense of justice and that her dances would speak to that spirit, as well as reinforce it. This conviction, in addition to Tamiris' belief that "we must not forget the age we live in," was reflected in her choreography (Martin 1963; 160). Tamiris' work often dealt with the social concerns of the time. She often performed in benefits for social causes and was always ready and willing to work towards the economic betterment of dancers.

One of the best examples of Tamiris' choreography dealing with timely social concerns were the "Negro Spirituals." The "Negro Spirituals" were dances performed to various Negro Spirituals. Tamiris performed the first two "Negro Spirituals" in her second dance concert in January, 1928. About the "Negro Spirituals" Tamiris wrote:

In these dances, I wanted to express the spirit of the Negro people--in the first ["Nobody Knows de Trouble I See"], his sense of oppression--in the second ["Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho"], his fight and struggle and remembrance when 'the walls came tumbling down' (1989-90; 40).

Eventually there were nine "Negro Spirituals" (some were solos and some were group pieces) and they became Tamiris' signature work. The "Negro Spirituals" demonstrate the affinity Tamiris felt with blacks, as well as all oppressed people. She wanted to see a change in the situation of people who were suffering from subjugation and prejudice. By performing various "Negro Spirituals,"

Tamiris drew attention to the plight of an oppressed population in hopes that the audience would do something to help change that plight.

The "Negro Spirituals" were liked by both audiences and critics. These dances were performed by Tamiris throughout her dancing career. The "Negro Spirituals" were a white interpretation of black material, but this did not bother audiences, even racially mixed audiences. Dance historian Marcia B. Siegel opines that when performed by Tamiris, the "Negro Spirituals" remained free of racial implications because:

From what we know of her life, she seems hardly the type to patronize or exploit this kind of material. She responded to it, and in her own way. Perhaps her lack of guile is what we miss as [Bruce] Becker [Tamiris' nephew] so artfully tries to imitate her (1979; 44).

As a further statement on Tamiris' association with social causes, one need only look at the list of organizations Tamiris and/or her group performed for. In 1929 she performed in a benefit for the New School for Social Research and also a private program for the American Women's Association; in 1931 she danced in a benefit for the Miners' Defense Committee; and in 1934 Tamiris and her group performed in the New Masses Benefit (Schlundt 1972; 12,13,24,30). In addition, Tamiris and her company danced in a program presented by the Major Revolutionary Workers

Dance League and in a program by the International Labor Defense, both in 1935 (Schlundt 1972; 32,34). In 1936, Tamiris and her group appeared in a program for the American League Against War and Fascism (Schlundt 1972; 35).

Tamiris had an affinity with unions and a strong belief in cooperative action. As Walter Terry states, she was an "ardent left-winger" (Terry 11/6/66; 31). According to Christena Schlundt, Tamiris later became suspect politically for dancing in benefits for such organizations as the New Masses and the Major Revolutionary Workers' Dance League (1972; 61). Tamiris' belief in collectivism as a way to champion people's rights was not unusual for the age in which she lived. As with a number of other historians, Russell Lynes in The Lively Audience believes that the Depression forced American artists to abandon their aloofness from society's problems and that artists shifted their focus to the political left as a solution to the problems which brought about the Depression and the resultant problems caused by the Depression (1985; 405). Many saw the Depression as the apparent failure of capitalism and looked to the left for possible answers.

THE DEPRESSION

By the time the Depression hit, Tamiris had her own group of dancers. Unlike American modern dance pioneers Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, Tamiris did not have her

own technique which she wanted to impose on her dancers. She worked with her company as individuals allowing them to move within their own styles. The way she worked with her group reflects Tamiris' belief in the importance of collective work. When interviewed about her dancers, Tamiris said that the group members' desire was "to function as a group, and not individualistically." She explained that she was the leader because the:

girls grant me the position of director quite naturally, in view of my longer experience and more extensive knowledge of the dance. But in the actual development of a dance it becomes a truly collective work; suggestions are made, criticized by all of us (Church 11/36; 101, 103).

It is very likely that the work of Tamiris and her group was done on a cooperative basis and that she worked with the individual movement styles of her dancers, but it is difficult to believe that Tamiris could function in such a group without being a leader. She was a woman of great vitality and drive and it was a rarity to find her in a situation in which she was not a leader.

In 1930 the Depression made the lives of dancers harder than ever. As an example of her faith in cooperative action, Tamiris was the driving force behind the formation of the Dance Repertory Theatre with Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman (Hering 1954; 101). By forming such an organization, the parties involved could rent one

theatre for their joint performances and share the rental cost along with other costs while still allowing the individual companies to perform their own works. While the Dance Repertory Theatre was a financially sound idea, it was dissolved after two years due to a variety of suspicions and jealousies among the various artists. Although the collective nature of the Dance Repertory Theatre failed, Tamiris still believed that cooperative action was the key to financial protection of dancers. Tamiris continued to work with organizations that would better the predicament of dancers as a whole. She served on the Board of Directors of the Concert Dancers' League, which was formed in 1931 to fight sabbath laws which the police used to close down Sunday night dance concerts (Schlundt 1972; 39).

For Tamiris, the Concert Dancers' League was an opportunity for dancers to protect their interest and rights by functioning along the lines of a union, such as Actors' Equity:

The dancers' organization is young and you can't expect it to be as powerful right now as Equity has become. But it will grow. It can be immensely useful in arbitrating disputes between dancers and the businessmen who manage theatres and put on productions. Many artists are impractical in business matters; they need the support of their own organization (Roberts 4/31; 30).

Tamiris' faith in the potential of the Concert Dancers' League was an example of her indefatigable belief that

people desire to unite for a common good. While the Concert Dancers' League was successful in its fight against the sabbath laws, the organization soon disbanded. The League was one of the first examples of dancers only being able to organize for a single issue.

Tamiris did not give up hope, nor her fight to better the economic status of dancers. She worked with various organizations involved with social causes, but according to Schlundt, although she appeared under their auspices occasionally, Tamiris was never a leader in the more militant and radical groups such as the Workers Dance League (later called the New Dance League) (1972; 39). Like many artists and intellectuals of that time, Tamiris no doubt concurred with the vision of equality offered by communism and socialism and some of her work reflected this.

"Cycle of Unrest," which was presented in 1935, illustrates Tamiris' affinity with the Marxist movement. "Cycle of Unrest" consisted of five dances: "Protest," "Camaraderie," "The Individual and the Mass," "Affirmation," and "Conflict" and according to Schlundt the five dances were an "optimistic affirmation of the individual enriched by the mass" (1972; 28-9). The Daily Worker described "Conflict" as a presentation of the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and proletarians where three evening-gowned ladies "wilt away before the strength and militancy of the

mass" as represented by three women in sweaters and skirts (Verne 1/16/35). Dance critics criticized Tamiris for using social themes too obviously and for being too literal. A review in the Dance Observer stated that "Tamiris must forego the literal development of perfectly suitable dance themes" (O'Donnell 12/35; 100). The leftist critics faulted Tamiris for being abstract in her work; there was not enough propaganda. A review in the Daily Worker said that Tamiris was "slowly but definitely maturing as a revolutionary artist, although she is reluctant to leave behind her some of the inconsequential numbers of previous years" (Verne 1/16/35).

Tamiris was true to herself, her time and nationality in her work. She did not set out to please dance critics, nor radical political parties, no matter what affinity she had with them. Tamiris choreographed her dances in the way she thought best conveyed her message to an audience. She used the spoken work if necessary. She was not afraid to try new things, even things that would appeal to a popular audience.

FEDERAL ARTS PROJECTS

It is well documented that Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that work relief was preferable to just doling out money to those left unemployed by the Great Depression. In 1933 the first job-relief program was set up. The initial

experiment with job-relief led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. The WPA was established to "provide jobs for the 'employable' unemployed" (Fortune 5/37; 110). The work created by the WPA suited the training and experience of the unemployed who were able to work. Money to fund the WPA came from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 (Leuchtenburg 1963; 125). This act allowed Roosevelt to spend the appropriated money in any manner he chose, giving the President unprecedented power in relation to Congress. Most of the money in the WPA backed projects went towards wages.

While most projects of the WPA involved manual labor, the director of the WPA, Harry Hopkins, saw to the creation of Federal One, the cultural department of the WPA (Furnas 1977; 400). Federal One consisted of four arts projects: art, music, theatre and writing.

When Tamiris found out that the WPA formed the Federal Theatre Project, she found a new cause. She threw all her energy into getting dance recognized as its own element in the Federal Arts Project. At this point, Tamiris' character had become clear. Tamiris was a leader with boundless energy who wanted the freedom, including financial freedom, to create her own art that responded to the age and country she lived in. She believed that individuals had the right to unite in order to protect the whole. In addition, she

had a keen sense of fairness and felt an affinity with the oppressed. Tamiris channeled her energy on behalf of dancers (after all, dancers were economically oppressed). She worked towards the economic betterment of dancers with the eventual goal of an organization that would act, if not be, a union for dancers.

Tamiris' relationship with the WPA, the Federal Theatre and the Dance Project gave her an opportunity to develop her opinions on government's relationship to dance and the other arts. This period also helped deepen Tamiris' resolve that dancers had to organize to protect themselves. Tamiris' efforts demonstrated her faith in cooperative action, as well as her conviction that it was the government's duty to support the cultural development and life of the country. Tamiris' leading principle was fairness. She believed that dance was a worthy and integral part of society and it was only fair that the government help support it. Tamiris' artistic work for the Dance Project continued to reflect her concern for fairness.

CHAPTER II
FORMATION OF THE FEDERAL DANCE PROJECT
CREATION

The Federal Theatre Project was formed in August of 1935. The New York Regional Director of the Federal Theatre Project approved the formation of three dance units within the Theatre Project in early January, 1936 (N.Y. Times 1/12/36; X:8). The inclusion of dance within another Project was not enough. Dancers resolved to persuade the government to establish an independent dance project. Tamiris spearheaded the effort for the creation of the Federal Dance Project. According to Margaret Lloyd, dance critic for the Christian Science Monitor, Tamiris went directly to Harry Hopkins in Washington D.C. to lobby for the Dance Project, and made that trip more than once (1949; 143).

On January 6, 1936 Tamiris presided over a meeting of more than 100 dancers who organized the Dancers' Association with the primary purpose of establishing a Federal Dance Project (N.Y. Times 1/7/36; 25). The feeling that dancers' problems were specialized and that the Federal Theatre Project could not handle such problems was prevalent. At this same meeting, a "Committee of Fifteen" was formed to direct the drive for an independent Dance Project and Tamiris was of course a member. Those at the meeting also

decided to participate in an upcoming demonstration sponsored by the City Projects Council (a portent of things to come) where they would stress the need for a Federal Dance Project.

The Dancers' Association sent a telegram to Hallie Flanagan, the National Director of the Federal Theatre Project, on January 15, 1936 requesting an independent Dance Project with its own administrative staff and a permanent theatre (Lally 1979; 24). The next day, Hallie Flanagan sent a telegram to Tamiris stating that the "request of Dancers' Association for formation of an independent dance project under Federal Theatre Project in New York is granted" (Lally 1979; 24-5). Don Oscar Becque was named supervisor of the project and Tamiris one of the choreographers.

The particulars of the administrative guidelines of the Federal Dance Project are not important to this study: what is important are the goals and guiding philosophies of those who made the Dance Project a reality. The approval of an independent Dance Project by Hallie Flanagan and Harry Hopkins demonstrated at the very least their tacit agreement with the philosophies of the advocates of an independent Dance Project. As representatives of government agencies, Flanagan and Hopkins' approval suggested government approval. The question then becomes, did the government

really know what it was getting into?

Harry Hopkins had the sensitivity and forethought to include the arts in the work relief program. J.C. Furnas, author of Stormy Weather, believes Hopkins' sensitivity stems from an experience in 1929 when Hopkins:

had been helping the staff of New York City's Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor assign work-relief jobs created by Red Cross funds. He noticed men carrying violin cases standing in line for pick-and-shovel jobs and, struck by the thought that fiddlers' hands were probably disastrously vulnerable to such work, saw to it that the lightest jobs went to them among Hopkins' innovations for the CWA [Civil Works Administration] was a policy of asking out-of-work singers, musicians, dancers to earn their relief money in government-organized variety shows for schools, settlement houses, churches (1977; 401).

Whether or not the story is true, Hopkins believed in work relief versus simple handouts and his support of the Arts Projects shows his belief that one should earn money doing what one is best trained to do. Agreement with Hopkins by other government officials came in part because they saw the arts as a vehicle to entertain a nation in a deep depression.

Since WPA projects were relief programs, the Arts Projects were established as non-commercial enterprises. Hopkins appointed Hallie Flanagan as National Director of the Federal Theatre Project. Flanagan was the Director of the Experimental Theatre at Vassar College. According to

Flanagan, Hopkins appointed her because she was from a non-commercial theatre; he told her that the Federal Theatre:

has to be run by a person who sees right from the start that the profits won't be money profits. It's got to be run by a person who isn't interested just in the commercial type of show. I know something about the plays you've been doing for ten years, plays about American life. This is an American job, not just a New York job (Flanagan 1940; 20).

Hopkins and Flanagan grew up in the same town and both attended Grinnell College. At Grinnell College the arts were treated as an important part of life and no doubt their days at Grinnell College furthered Hopkins' and Flanagan's love of the arts and belief in the arts as integral to American life (Bentley 1988; 186). Flanagan supported a theatre "which recognizes the presence of its sister arts" (Flanagan 11/35; 866). Dance had found an ally in Flanagan. Flanagan is quoted as saying, "in all periods when the theatre has been a vital part of life, the dance has existed at the core of it" (Lally 1978; 189). It is easy to see why the Dancers' Association had little difficulty convincing Flanagan to support an independent Dance Project.

Dancers achieved their goal of an independent Dance Project because such a project was compatible with the philosophies of both Hopkins and Flanagan and in these early stages of the Federal Arts Projects, Hopkins and Flanagan had the full support of President Roosevelt. Unfortunately,

gaining the status of an independent Project was just the first step for dancers in an up-hill struggle for a semblance of government-provided economic security.

ROLE OF DANCERS' ASSOCIATION

As Chairman of the Dancers' Association, Tamiris no doubt had a lot to do with the purposes set forth by that association. One of the four purposes of the Dancers' Association was "to safeguard the economic interests of the dancer" and the Association believed this could be accomplished by the government expanding its appropriations for the teaching and presentation of dance (Martin 2/9/36; X:8). The Dancers' Association also opposed censorship and believed in the right to collective bargaining.

Unlike actors and musicians, dancers did not have a union to represent them in collective bargaining. Thus, many dancers aligned themselves with the Workers' Alliance and the City Projects Council, which was the white collar branch of the Workers' Alliance. The purpose of the Workers' Alliance was to organize the unemployed and WPA workers without union representation in order to settle their grievances at the relief bureau or on WPA jobs, to prevent discrimination and to win higher relief standards and higher wages (Karsh & Garman 1957; 93). The Workers' Alliance conducted demonstrations and strikes to protest inadequate relief and layoffs from WPA projects. According

to Flanagan's memoirs, the dancers "threw into the Workers' Alliance all the energy of the fouetté, the pirouette, and the modern stamp and prance" (Flanagan 1940; 76). It must be noted that demonstrations and strikes were a common occurrence in this period of history, and it appears that dancers often joined these protests.

The affiliation between Federal Project employees and the Workers' Alliance was the cause of many problems for the Federal Dance Project and the Federal Theatre Project. The Workers' Alliance had ties to the Communist Party. In 1936 the Workers' Alliance united itself with the Communist Party's Unemployed Council (Karsh & Garman 1957; 93). This affiliation with the Communist Party was troublesome to many, especially in the Federal government.

It rapidly became clear that the goal of the Dancers' Association for expansion of government support of dance was not going to be fulfilled any time soon, since the Dance Project was having trouble discharging its original undertaking. \$155,00 was allocated to the Dance Project for its work through May, 1936 (Dance Observer 2/36; 14)². The Dance Project was allowed to hire 185 dancers. In early April, 1936 the quota of dancers still had not been filled and no performances had been given. A delegation of dancers went to one of the WPA administrators demanding to know what was being done to fill the quota of dancers; unsatisfied

with his answer, the dancers began to picket his office (Code 10/39; 264). During their second day of protest, the dancers were arrested. When the dancers came to trial later in the month, other dancers packed the court room. The case was dismissed. Grant Code refers to this incident as the "first recorded public performance of the dance project" (264).

Increasingly alarmed by the Dance Project's lack of progress in staging productions (other than courtroom dramas), a group of concerned dancers, including Tamiris, made a public plea to dancers for a Dance Congress and Festival:

There is a necessity of collective discussion and planning towards the preservation and development of the dance in America today. The Dance Congress will have this as its objective. The dancers are among those most affected by the world economic crisis. . . . The Dance Project is giving only temporary employment - to a small fraction of the dancers in a limited locale (Dance Observer 4/36; 38).

Tamiris was a member of the Joint Committee for a Dance Congress and Festival. The Dancers Association, with Tamiris as Chairperson, and the New Dance League organized the event.

The First National Dance Congress and Festival was held May 18 - 25, 1936 in New York City with 1,400 people attending and 200 dancers appearing in performances and demonstrations (National Dance Congress and Festival 1936;

3). Tamiris gave a speech on "The Economic Status of Dancers." She spoke of the uphill struggle the dance³ was involved in. Many still believed that the dance was a luxury and only the enlightened "include the dance with the other arts." She decried "the waste of energy and conditions under which the dancer works" (National Dance Congress and Festival 1936; 83). Further, she cited the Federal Dance Project as the first evidence of public recognition of the dance as a vital art:

It is entitled to the same measure of recognition by the authorities as are painting, music, sculpture, the theatre and literature. It behooves us to maintain the highest possible standard in our work, that it may constantly present a true expression of the people's needs and ideals. Once the public recognizes that the Dance is an art, related to them and not a hobby, we shall be able to obtain such assistance as we require as our right, with the approval of the community, rather than with its raised eyebrows" (84).

In her speech, Tamiris noted that the Federal Dance Project was still not large enough. Among the many resolutions passed by the National Dance Congress was one in favor of government dance projects in every possible city and another that protested the failure of the New York City Dance Project to fill its quota of dancers (National Dance Congress and Festival 1936; 95).

The First National Dance Congress and Festival was a significant event. What came to be referred to as modern

dance was not even ten years old in America and yet leaders of the modern dance movement, with Tamiris at the head, were able to organize an event on a large scale. Perhaps the modern dance leaders were emboldened by the reality that they were included in the Federal Arts Projects on an independent basis. As a matter of fact, modern dance was by far the most prominent dance genre in the Federal Dance Project. Those involved in other aspects of dance did not fail to notice this fact.

Just as the First National Dance Congress and Festival was concluding, the National Dance League, which represented dance instructors, wrote Harry Hopkins to complain that, among other things, the New York Dance Project "is being given over to modernistic dancing. . . . As this type of dancing has a limited public we feel it is serving a small interest of both dancers and taxpayers" (Headen 5/25/36). The National Dance League had a point. All the productions in rehearsal were of the "modernistic" variety. History shows that the Federal Dance Project did, almost exclusively, support modern dance productions.

SUPPORT OF MODERN DANCE

Why did the Federal Arts Projects support newly created "modern dance" instead of more established dance forms? The Director of the Dance Project, Don Oscar Becque, responded to the National Dance League that all types of dancers were

put to work in the Project as long as they conformed to the set professional standards and the Project was focused on modern dance because "the Federal Dance Theatre is working toward dance forms that deals [sic] most vitally with the world today and in the development of dance forms that most completely express the scenario in production" (Lally 1979; 27-8). The Federal Dance Project was not established to provide mere mindless entertainment and since modern dance aimed at something more than entertainment, it was a natural choice for the Project.

Becque touches upon the real reason that modern dance was at the forefront of the Dance Project. Modern dance, as represented by those in charge of the productions of the Dance Project, was an American phenomena. In the Manifest Tamiris had printed in one of her early programs, her first statement was:

Art is international, but the artist is a product of nationality and his principal duty to himself is to express the spirit of his race (Martin 1963; 160).

As proof of this belief, Tamiris often used American themes and composers for her dances.

Earlier, this study noted that one of the reasons Hopkins chose Flanagan as National Director of the Federal Theatre Project was that she produced plays about American life. Both Hopkins and Flanagan, as well as most artists in

America, realized that art could no longer be divorced from reality. The current economic situation in America forced artists to look at real life. Art could no longer afford to be art for its own sake. Art had to draw its inspiration from what was currently affecting the populace, specifically the American populace which was suffering a deep economic depression. Flanagan was aware of the upsurge of modern dance in America. In 1935 she used Martha Graham as an example of an artist conscious of social changes and one who used American themes (Flanagan 11/35; 867-8). Flanagan, in writing about her plans for the Federal Theatre Project, further stated that it "is time that the theatre is brought face to face with the great economic problems of the day" (868).

Flanagan realized that art which dealt with current economic realities was experimental in nature at that time and she fully supported experimental projects. It is no wonder then that Flanagan and Hopkins allowed control of Federal Dance Project productions to fall to modern dancers. Ballet and ballroom dance choreography did not deal with the problems of the day. These dance forms, especially at that time, were concerned with technical virtuosity and entertainment. By supporting modern dance in the Federal Arts Projects, Flanagan and Hopkins promoted Tamiris' belief that:

The validity of the modern dance is rooted in its ability to express modern problems (and some of these are social problems), to touch modern audiences into sympathetic awareness of social conditions, even to excite them into wanting to do something about them" (Lloyd 2/13/38).

Tamiris' statement not only described the validity of modern dance of the day, but was also one of the goals Hallie Flanagan set for the Federal Theatre Project.

The performance aspect of the Dance Project represented one of three units. Other units supplied dancers for theatre productions and free dance instruction. In addition to complaints about the Dance Project being controlled by modern dancers, the National Dance League voiced complaints that Federal Dance Project teachers were giving free dance classes to those who could afford to pay, thus competing with private teachers (Headen 5/25/36). True or not, this charge was made throughout the existence of the Dance Project. The government required that relief projects not compete with private or commercial enterprises. The competition with private enterprises, real or not, was part of the eventual downfall of the Project.

DANCE PROJECT TROUBLES

The basic philosophies of Tamiris, as one who spearheaded the creation of the Federal Dance Project, and Hopkins and Flanagan were in tune, but the Project was plagued from its inception by red tape, bureaucratic

reporting, personnel changes and budget inadequacies. The first production was finally presented at the end of June, 1936--almost six months after the Project's creation.

Now that the Project finally had productions that were opening, WPA administrators wanted to make sure that the productions were easily accessible to the general public. Accessibility, of course, was the goal of all the Arts Projects. All the Federal Theatre and Dance productions were either free or at a low cost to the public. Inexpensive admission or not, the subject matter also needed to be accessible.

Tamiris' first production for the Dance Project reflected her principle of fairness that included the notion of social justice. The production was "Salut au Monde," an adaptation of Walt Whitman's poem of the same name, presented July 23 through August 5, 1936. A press release describes "Salut au Monde:"

The opening episode is danced by Tamiris. It is a greeting to Whitman and symbolizes the uniting with him in a salute to the wide world. The second episode presents the entire group in a dance showing the struggle and disharmony among the races, and the efforts of a few brave souls to create understanding. The third and fourth episodes, which are particularly effective as theatre, describe how vast is the difference between racial culture, traditions and psychology, yet show that the Chinese coolies, and the poverty stricken Negroes of the south have fundamentally the same problems. . . . The concluding episode repeats the theme of the struggle. Tamiris appears again as the soloist. She exhorts the

struggling toilers of all nationalities, represented by the group, to unite in peace and work together on a common earth. She dances until the group, which has fallen back at her entrance, rises and joins her in answer to the call (Federal Dance Theatre Press Release; 2).

"Salut au Monde" dealt with the melting pot nature of America. Tamiris fiercely wanted equality and harmony among the various races. This subject matter fell into the category of work desired by Flanagan for the Federal Theatre Project; it dealt with current American life. The production of "Salut au Monde" was also experimental in nature (also a desirous feature for Flanagan) in that it was a full work that incorporated elements of theatre. Each episode was introduced by a reader, making dance more accessible to non-dance audiences.

The Dance Project was finally on stage and under way, yet discontent with the administration, particularly with the Director, Don Oscar Becque, was growing. The quota of dancers was still not filled and there were few productions. The discontent was often evidenced by dancers picketing and culminated in a public hearing on the Federal Dance Project in October, 1936. The hearing quickly became an attack on Becque's supervision of the Dance Project. Becque was charged with incompetence. Tamiris called Becque "petty" and "dictatorial" and was especially incensed by his attempt to force a "common denominator" on dancers in the Project

(Gilfond 11/36; 97). Modern dancers had spent years developing their own techniques, thus a common technique among them all was an anathema! The meeting concluded with a call for Becque's resignation.

In an article in the December, 1936 issue of Dance, Becque accused dancers of submerging themselves in radicalism and in "indulging in an orgy of fist-clenching" (Dance 12/36). Tamiris responded to Becque in the next issue. Tamiris pointed out that there was a lot of fist-clenching in the world today and since the dancers used current American life as a creative source, they could not ignore the fist-clenching. Tamiris then strongly defended the right of dancers to participate in "fist-clenching:"

Dancers engaged in fighting for their jobs, dancers who find themselves on picket lines protesting abuses and the conditions under which they live and function, do not do so for the sake of fist-clenching. They would much rather be at peace, hard at work in the studio or workshop, busy at their creative labors. But through bitter experience they have learned that more 'dance-consciousness' at the expenses of life-consciousness leads to no dance at all, or to art for art's sake, which today simply means no audience and flagrant self-expressionism fated only to be enjoyed by the dancer himself. The dancer knows that to be an efficient worker in his field, to be able to produce, he must have food, clothing, a studio to work in and opportunities to perform. And it is not enough for us to tell him that he has the right to these fundamentals, and in the same breath imply that there is no point in exercising that right (Tamiris 1/37; 9).

By the time the issue of Dance with Tamiris' response

to Becque was released, Becque had resigned from his position as Director of the Dance Project (Becque was never replaced). The beliefs espoused by Tamiris were the prevalent beliefs of those remaining in the Dance Project. The dancers believed they were a value to society and therefore deserved society's, i.e., the government's support. Further, the dancers considered the right to battle for support their due. Dancers wanted the financial freedom to practice their art.

The Dance Project was still dominated by modern dancers, that is, dancers who in the practice of their art form, take the real world into consideration. That the Dance Project still existed in 1937 was a tribute to Hallie Flanagan's continued support of experimental art forms of which modern dance was one. In November, 1936 the Federal Arts Directors were ordered to reduce their employees by 20% (Bentley 1988; 245). According to Flanagan's biographer, Flanagan chose to cut "projects doing 'old plays in old ways'" (Bentley 1988; 247). By not cutting out the Dance project completely, Flanagan displayed her support for the experimental nature of modern dance.

AMERICAN DANCE ASSOCIATION

The year 1937 saw unions becoming more and more powerful. For example, through sit-down strikes and takeovers of plants, the United Automobile Workers (UAW) had

General Motors grant recognition to its workers in February, 1937. By the end of 1937 U.S. Steel and every car manufacturer (except Ford) were unionized (Leuchtenburg 1963; 240).

The power of collective action in achieving results beneficial to workers was at an all-time high. Tamiris' belief in the power of collectivism led her to further consolidate the power of dancers. As Chairman of the Dancers Association, Tamiris proposed the amalgamation of the Dancers Association, the New Dance League and the Dance Guild (Schlundt 1972; 41). This step would eliminate overlapping functions of the organizations and would augment their individual power in an attempt to advance dancers in their struggle for economic security.

The New Dance League was founded in 1933 as the Workers' Dance League with the aim of combining revolution and modern dance (Manor 1985; 29). The Dance Guild served the needs of young and apprentice artists (Schlundt 1972; 40). Tamiris had friends in both of these organizations and was able to convince them to agree to the amalgamation. The new organization was called the American Dance Association ("ADA"). In the Constitution of the ADA, the first purpose listed of the organization was "to safeguard the economic interests of the dancers" (Dance Observer 5/37; 57). The ADA had two membership sections: professional and non-

professional. The intent of establishing professional memberships was to build the organization along trade union lines (Dance Observer 5/37; 57).

The ADA held its first convention May 14-16, 1937. Tamiris was elected National Chairman of the ADA. It was decided that one of the main objectives (out of two) was:

Making the world more secure for all dancers by carrying on an even stronger campaign on the economic front. . . . The working out of a prevailing wage scale, a vigorous campaign for federally subsidized dance theatres, and for a national Academy wherein teachers and performers may be trained by the best exponents of the dance in order to bring the dance to more people, a continued campaign for the permanence and expansion of the present Federal Dance Project as the starting point toward this objective--all these are embodied in resolutions passed at the convention, and on the program of the Association for the coming year (Church 6&7/37; 61, 65).

The importance of the Federal Dance Project as a vehicle for permanent economic security for dancers cannot be underestimated. Federal subsidy could finally give dancers the opportunity to work solely in their art form. Then, as well as today, it was difficult for a dancer to survive financially solely on performing and/or choreographing. The Depression further added to the financial hardship of dancers. Tamiris believed that modern dancers, as artists, deserved the opportunity to make a livable wage as dancers and the members of the ADA concurred in her belief.

Tamiris and the ADA did not see the Federal Arts Projects as mere relief projects; the projects were viewed as a way to better art. Through financial security artists could concentrate completely on their art. In addition, federal subsidy could be used for national academies where future artists could learn from the best, thus in the long run improving the art form.

It is interesting to note that Hallie Flanagan sent a letter of greeting and co-operation to the ADA Convention. Flanagan also viewed the Federal Arts Projects as a way to improve art, not mere relief. She envisioned the Arts Projects as "part of a tremendous re-thinking, re-building and re-dreaming of America" and that the government would not only provide relief to unemployed artists, it would also be "creating a national theatre and building a national culture" (Bentley 1988; 189-90).

While in the beginning of 1937 Flanagan and Tamiris pinned high hopes onto what could be accomplished by the Federal Arts Projects, Franklin Roosevelt was worried about economic recession and considered slashing spending (Leuchtenburg 1963; 244). Rumors of impending cuts to the WPA budget were rampant in New York, leading to daily demonstrations and protests (Bentley 1988; 256).

During this period it was the dancers who staged what was perhaps the most dramatic and visible protest. On May

6, 1937 Tamiris' "How Long Brethren?" and Charles Weidman's "Candide" opened on Broadway (for a very successful run). Following the May 19 performance, Charles Weidman came on stage and asked the audience to join the performers and crew in a sit-down strike to protest impending cuts to the WPA budget (N.Y. Times 5/20/37). More than one-third of the audience elected to participate in the sit-down strike which lasted all night while the City Projects Council sponsored a picket outside the theatre. Over 500 people picketed and the street had to be shut down. Research does not relate whether or not Tamiris participated in the sit-down strike, but she was one of the performers in "How Long Brethren?" so it is likely she remained at the theatre that night for what has become one of the most noted protests against WPA budget cuts.

On May 27, 1937 the Workers' Alliance, plus several unions, staged a city-wide strike by WPA employees to protest any reductions to the WPA budget (Flanagan 1940; 201). The next day Flanagan spoke before the American Theatre Council and voiced her support for her employees by stating that they were "striking for what was once described as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness . . . if we object to the method I feel that some word should come from this gathering as to a better method" (202). Suggestions as to better methods were not offered. Flanagan's reaction to

protests by Federal Project employees was the same as Tamiris'. Both believed that artists were entitled to financial support from their government and that they had the right to strike in order to bring their plight to the attention of government and society as a whole. The belief that collective action was the most viable means to achieve results was very prevalent.

In the case of Federal Project workers, protests did not help. In June, 1937 Flanagan received word that WPA appropriations had been cut by 25% (Bentley 1988; 257). The announcement of the budget cuts was met with further protests.

According to New Deal historian William Leuchtenburg, the WPA budget was cut by Roosevelt because he was worried about inflation (1963; 244). The Roosevelt administration was embroiled in a debate over whether to balance the government budget or to continue deficit spending until private business became more prosperous. By August the country was in a recession (part of the continuing problems of the depression). Middle class support for Roosevelt was eroding because of the financial condition of the country. In addition, the middle class was becoming less sympathetic to labor and their demonstration tactics (Leuchtenburg 1963; 242).

As it has been said, "the show must go on," and even

with budget cuts, ongoing protests and turmoil within the government, the artists of the Federal Arts Projects continued their work and audiences continued to flock to the productions. By October, 1937 the Federal Dance Project quietly merged with the Theatre Project because of the budget cuts (Schlundt 1972; 43). The loss of independent status by the Dance Project did not affect the number or quality of dance productions. If anything, dance activities increased. In the summer of 1937 dance productions began to appear in Los Angeles and a Federal Dance Unit became active in Chicago in early 1938 (Flanagan 1940; 138, 238). Also, three additional works by Tamiris were presented.

Tamiris' second production for the Dance Project was the highly successful "How Long, Brethren?," a suite of seven dances based on seven Negro Songs of Protest which spoke of poverty, starvation, injustice and death. "How Long, Brethren?" was an artistically integrated piece. It used a large black choir and a full orchestra. The choir sang the following songs from "Negro Songs of Protest": "Pickin' off the Cotton," "Upon de Mountain," "Railroad," "Scottsboro," "Sistern an' Brethren," "Let's Go to de Buryin'," and "How Long, Brethren" (Schlundt 1972; 46). The final song concluded that the suffering of blacks had gone on too long and the dancing conveyed a plea to end the injustice.

"How Long, Brethren?" was dance theatre. The piece was not movement for its own sake; it incorporated all the artistic elements to carry Tamiris' statement on current American life and she felt it should change. One of the original dancers in "How Long, Brethren?" stated:

If you listen to the words of the poetry in the songs, you'll get the feeling - - the entire feeling - - of the dance. If you're just doing movement, forget it. I mean, you're not - you shouldn't be in this thing (National Public Radio/Morning Edition 5/2/91; 38).

Tamiris' artistic concept for "How Long, Brethren?" had great impact on its audiences. The opening night audience interrupted the show numerous times with applause and shouts so loud that the dancers could not hear the choir or orchestra. The performance culminated in a standing ovation:

Never at any performance of modern dance was there heard such a spontaneous outburst of applause as during the first performance of "How Long, Brethren?," generated purely by dance movement plus the emotional stimulus of rhythm and melody (Dance 7/37; 11).

Such reactions to "How Long, Brethren?" were common throughout its sold out run. Although most dance critics did not comment on the social content of the piece, obviously the subject matter of social injustice moved the audience and was appropriate at this time. There was something about "How Long, Brethren?" that the audience could relate to. As Schlundt put it, "it was a statement of

the here and now of the middle thirties, what "Hair" was to the late sixties" (1972; 47).

Through her art, Tamiris was able to relate to her audiences the reality of the times and perhaps she made them think how those times could be improved. Through her work as an advocate on behalf of dancers, Tamiris wanted the government to understand the reality of the economic status of dancers and their value to society. Tamiris did not believe that a starving artist was a better artist. Just the opposite, she saw that the spirit of a nation improved when artists were financially free to add to the cultural well-being.

Tamiris next worked on "Trojan Incident," a play with music and dance. Dancing took about half the playing time. Tamiris acted and danced the role of Cassandra and choreographed the group dancing. "Trojan Incident" was a victim of Federal Theatre red-tape and budget cuts. When finally shown, the production was met with much criticism. A common complaint was that the choreography was not integrated well with the play (Butler 5/38; 70). Another critic was disturbed by the intensity of Tamiris' approach and the fervor with which she treated the subject (Kaye 6/38; 17). Grant Code, though, defended Tamiris' work in "Trojan Incident:"

The group dances were about a society distracted

by war, and most particularly about the relation of women to life and to destruction. This is an extremely vital and contemporary theme for us as it was for Euripides, and Tamiris gave it a most poignant presentation in her group dances. Her own solo was largely about the deep and passionate sources of an artist's inspiration. . . . Perhaps one does have to be some sort of artist and to some extent familiar with the experience of inspiration whether social or personal to be thoroughly moved by Tamiris' Cassandra. Those who lack passion, pity, poetry, faith in life, hatred of destruction would miss 'Trojan Incident' (11/39; 281).

All criticism aside, "Trojan Incident" was a step into a new realm for Tamiris. Tamiris acted and was given a chance to further experiment in the integration of various art forms. Tamiris wanted to reach as many people as possible with her work and with dance in general. She saw federal support of dance as a great opportunity to bring dance to the thousands who had not seen it. Theatrical work presented such an opportunity. Tamiris did not have a specific technique and often ventured into new areas. She did not want to appeal to just one specific clique of dance devotees, she wanted to reach out to as many people as possible and work in theatre presented one such avenue.

Tamiris' last production for the Dance Project was "Adelante." According to critic Margaret Lloyd, "Adelante" was the "first of the big modern ballets" and was "built for spectacle as well as for significance, and it had a story" (1949; 145). The work lasted for over an hour and included

a narrator (reading modern Spanish poems) and a chorus of twelve.

In "Dance and the Workers' Struggle," Stacey Prickett suggests that in the late 1930's dances concentrated more on repression abroad rising from fascism and the Spanish Civil War than on the plight of the worker (Spring 1990; 59). Following that pattern, "Adelante" was ten pictures of Spanish history and life that:

Visualized in a series of flash-backs the thoughts of a Loyalist soldier between the shots of the enemy firing-squad and his death. . . . He remembered the Renaissance, the Inquisition, the elegance and decadence of the Court, as well as personal history of love and death, marriage and war (Lloyd 1949; 145).

With the presentation of her works by the Federal Dance Project, Tamiris was able to bring her vision of the reality of the times to vast audiences. With continued federal support, she saw the possibility of the art of dance becoming a viable part of American existence.

CHAPTER III
FINE ARTS BILLS
COFFEE BILL

At the point when the Dance Project lost its independent status, the battle for legitimization of federal support of the arts became a struggle for the creation of permanent federal support of the arts. In the Fall of 1937 the ADA was presented with the perfect opportunity to campaign for the permanence of the Federal Dance Project with the introduction of the Federal Arts Bill in Congress by Representative John Coffee. The Federal Arts Bill, sponsored by the Federal Arts Projects, provided for a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts under federal subsidy and further provided that:

the functions and powers now exercised by the WPA in connection with the fine arts shall be assigned and transferred to the Bureau of Fine Arts, that those employed on the WPA arts projects on June 30, 1937 shall continue in such employment under jurisdiction of the Bureau (Church 11/37; 116).

Arts organizations all over the country expressed their opposition or support of the Coffee Bill. Since the Bill did stipulate that WPA employees were to be part of the permanent Bureau, the Coffee Bill was attacked by many as a permanent relief project that would place the needs of the unemployed above the fostering of good art. The philosophies of Dance Observer and Dance, represent the

basic argument over the Coffee Bill: relief versus art. There were of course those who opposed the Bill in its entirety.

In an editorial, the periodical Dance Observer, without reservation, immediately urged dancers to support and urge passage of the Coffee Bill (11/37; 107). The editors of Dance Observer saw a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts as a vehicle that would provide economic security for dancers and other artists, along with the added benefit of enrichment of the nation's culture.

While the magazine Dance (a precursor to Dance Magazine) came out in support of the principles behind the creation of a Bureau of Fine Arts, it strongly opposed Section 6 of the Bill, which provided for the transference of the WPA projects to the proposed Bureau, on the grounds that need over ability would be the criteria for hiring (Milton 12/37; 18). Dance's editor, Paul R. Milton, supported the general principle of the creation of a Bureau to foster the development of the arts, but he wanted the Bill to be emphasize that hiring was not based on providing relief of unemployment, but on talent and ability.

The basic "relief versus art" argument was not the only objection to the Coffee Bill. Many found fault with several of the other sections, in particular those sections that hinted at union control of the proposed Bureau. For

instance, the Commissioner of the proposed Bureau had to consult with "organizations representing artists employed on the projects within the region" in his selection of the Bureau members (Downes 1/23/38; XI:7). The Commissioner had to select Bureau members from those recommended by the organizations (i.e., unions) representing artists in the Federal Arts Projects. Many feared that giving unions that much power would simply make the Bureau's hiring practices a question of hiring those in favor with the union, and ability would not play a role. In addition, the possibility of the Workers' Alliance and City Projects Councils having a say in the Bureau was not appealing to many.

Writing on behalf of Dance Observer, Marjorie Church did not object to the provisions on the hiring practices of the proposed Bureau. She wrote:

The bill, with its provisions for democratic administration would be even a step beyond the systems in effect in most other countries, and there is no reason why, in America, provision should not be made for the security and well-being of our artists, with all that it will mean toward a full and free development of cultural expression (11/37; 116).

Perhaps Marjorie Church's opinions on the Coffee Bill were naive and simplistic, but her view represents what most dancers who were involved with the Federal Dance Project felt. As discussed previously, one of the main themes reiterated at the ADA Convention in May, 1937 was that

dancers continue to crusade for an expanded and permanent Federal Dance Project (Church 6&7/37; 61). The primary concern of the ADA members was economic security, the exact details of a proposed permanent Arts Project were not as important.

Another interesting point in Church's article was the mention of government support of the arts in other countries. The fact that the United States was the only major Western country in the world that did not support its own cultural development was a central rallying point for support of a permanent Fine Arts Bureau. While debate was raging over the Coffee Bill, Tamiris was interviewed on the WPA National Radio Division on December 25, 1937. When asked how she felt about government sponsorship for dance and the arts in general, Tamiris vehemently responded:

I suppose you are aware of the fact that we are the only major country in the world that does not have a bureau of fine arts in the government cabinet. Recent figures indicate that in 1936, France spent 7 million dollars to foster a Fine Arts program, Germany 4 millions [sic], Great Britain--5 millions [sic], and Italy and the Soviet Union have long recognized the artistic field as a definite integral part of a Nation's existence. Let us think but a few years back--that is the days of '32 before the American Government had established Works Programs. The Arts had been dependent on the patronage of a small group of wealthy people interested in Art. That patronage had practically dwindled away. The artist and the life he reflects in his work unfortunately can't dwindle away. It has been said that man cannot live by bread alone. The cultural artery of a nation's thought must be

nourished. . . . when we consider that towns with populations as high as 50,000 are sometimes without a theatre we can readily appreciate how we have sadly neglected a cultural program. The same holds true for the dance. . . . There have been many attempts to create dance centers under private subsidy, throughout the country, but the art of the dance has come of age in a period of a genuine depression. I am not here talking of the many commercial companies that are imported from Europe and tour the country. I am talking about the native artist and the need for the development of an American Dance. The WPA has already made an enormous contribution toward this development, and so if you ask me how I feel about Federal sponsorship for the Dance and the Arts in general--I am all for it! (8,9).

Tamiris' above response was a most articulate and persuasive argument for permanent Federal support of the arts, but the many groups and individuals affected by the proposed legislation were concerned over the details of the Coffee Bill not over its overall intent.

COFFEE-PEPPER BILL

Numerous constructive criticisms offered by various arts groups did lead to the modification of the Coffee Bill and it was reintroduced jointly by Representative Coffee and Senator Claude Pepper on January 21, 1938. Since the main objection to the Coffee Bill was the provision that made the WPA arts projects permanent as is, Section 6 of the Bill, now known as the Coffee-Pepper Bill, was changed to provide that:

all persons presently employed on other projects under the WPA, who are competent to carry out the objectives of this act shall continue in such

employment (Downes 1/30/38; X:7).

The Coffee-Pepper Bill also made changes in the sections that could lead to union control of the proposed Bureau. Supporters of the Federal Arts Bill hoped that the modifications would erase the apprehensions that the proposed Bureau was just a permanent form of unemployment relief and that competency would be the guiding principle.

But the new version of the Federal Arts Bill, the Coffee-Pepper Bill, did not eradicate opposition and the dissension among arts groups continued. To add to the conundrum, in February of 1938 Representative William Sirovich introduced a bill for A Federal Department of Sciences, Art and Literature which would subsidize creative arts (N.Y. Times 2/8/38; 17).

As an example of a reasonable approach, the Magazine of Art supported the purpose of the Coffee-Pepper Bill "to encourage the development of art in the United States" but expressed serious concern over the ability of the administrators involved to carry through the purpose:

If they can withstand the vociferous and emotional pressure of minority groups the bill might, if enacted, produce what most of us really want (2/38; 119).

The Magazine of Art urged its readers to obtain a copy of the bill for study and to make their opinions known to Congress.

In February, 1938 the House Patents Committee held hearings on a Federal Bureau to subsidize creative art. Actors Equity (the union representing actors) acting president, Burgess Meredith, favored permanent subsidy of the arts based on the work started by the WPA and favored the Coffee-Pepper Bill (N.Y. Times 2/8/38; 17).

In its testimony before the House Patents Committee, the Fine Arts Federation of New York (composed of delegates of 17 representative arts organizations) opposed all the Fine Arts Bills on the grounds that the proposed Bureau would be:

a labor union for a mass of artists who would otherwise be unemployed or in danger of unemployment. The aegis of the government is invoked in order to create prestige, power and security of employment, but the power is to be wielded by the members of the union, not the government. . . . In this organization, need, not ability, is the sine qua non. As a permanent set-up rather than as emergency relief, the proposal introduces a certain totalitarian concept of Federal functions incompatible with the free enterprise which has heretofore been the particular genius of our democracy (N.Y. Times 2/13/38; II:3).

The Federal Arts Committee was established to urge creation of a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts and it tried to bring arts organizations together to work out a bill that would be acceptable to all (N.Y. Times 2/21/38; 21). A multitude of arts groups, which included unions, came forth to express their opinions on the Fine Arts Bills.

Testimony before the House Patents Committee and further debate on the Fine Arts Bills fell into two categories. Support for permanent federal support of the arts came from those already involved with the Federal Arts Projects and those who welcomed union support as a way of collective action that achieved results. Those opposed to the Fine Arts Bills were leery of unions and viewed them as too all-consuming. The opponents did not want a Fine Arts Bureau that would become a union tool as well as a political tool. They were concerned with artistic freedom; they felt art was "pure" and to put it in the political arena was to sully it.

Interestingly enough, New York Times drama critic Brooks Atkinson wrote an article against the proposed Fine Arts Bills that extended itself to criticism of the existing Federal Theatre Project (of which the Dance Project was now a part). Atkinson was against making the Federal Theatre Project permanent as it existed at this date. Atkinson did applaud the work of Flanagan:

she came as close as any one can to making a people's theatre out of an emergency relief project. . . . the project did a notable job of reviving the theatre all through the country, creating new audiences and providing socially valuable theatre services that most people know nothing about. What she did was accomplished in spite of cumbersome supervision in Washington and warfare inside the project (2/20/38; XI: 1).

By mid-1937 Harry Hopkins' support of Flanagan was

waning and in August the handling of the Arts Projects in New York was given to Paul Edwards (Flanagan 1940; 316). Many member of Congress were unhappy with the supposedly leftist leanings of the Federal Theatre Project and thus the Federal Theatre Project was becoming a political liability. In his article, Atkinson went on to bemoan the current state of the Federal Theatre Project:

the progressive theatre which Mrs. Flanagan was succeeding in developing is now falling apart - particularly in New York, which employs 4,000 of the 8,000 people on the national project. Many people believe that Mrs. Flanagan was gracefully pushed to one side because the Federal Theatre is unpopular in Washington. It is noisy all out of proportion to its size. . . . it meets millions of Americans across the footlights; and having had some enterprise in the past it is conspicuous, builds up opposition when it treads on political toes and endangers the whole of WPA in Washington (XI: 1).

Atkinson only wanted a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts if it was not relief oriented and had no restraints on its creativity. Atkinson's article, as well as the reality of how the government was treating the Federal Theatre Project, gave credence to the fear that a permanent Fine Arts Bureau could become a political tool. On the other hand, even with all the political fallout, the Arts Projects had brought culture and an enhancement of the quality of life to thousands of Americans.

DANCE COMMUNITY'S REACTIONS TO FINE ARTS BILLS

The dancer community was not able to make up its

collective mind about the Fine Arts Bills. John Martin, dance critic for the New York Times, wrote that although the Coffee-Pepper Bill was not a perfect one, "its present form is likely to reveal no serious shortcomings that cannot be rectified by the alteration or addition of half a dozen words" (2/27/38; X:10). Martin believed that the proposed Fine Arts Bureau would be divorced from relief considerations. He did feel that the Bill needed clarification as to the appointment procedure to make clear that the Workers' Alliance and City Projects Council would not be involved in electing directors of the Fine Arts Bureau. In addition, Martin wanted clarification on the teaching aspects of the proposed Bill so that the Bureau's activities "would not disestablish the private schools now operating" (X:10). In conclusion he stated his belief that the Bill was "entitled to the most vigorous and widespread support" (X:10).

Yet vigorous and widespread support for the Fine Arts Bills was not forthcoming from dancers. For example, Martha Graham read the official opinion of the ADA in support of the Fine Arts Bills and immediately followed it with her own opinion against it (Schlundt 1972; 43). A meeting of dance teachers, under the auspices of the Dancing Teachers Business Association, ended in deadlock between teachers who opposed the Bill in its entirety and those who supported the

Bill in principle, but wanted certain amendments (N.Y. Times 2/28/38; 18).

The staunchest supporter of the proposed Fine Arts Bureau in the dance community was the Dance Observer. In its March, 1938 issue, the Dance Observer strongly endorsed the Federal Arts Bill by pointing out that:

Dance has the most to gain or lose by the ultimate fate of this bill. Through its passage, the dance could develop its native material and come into full flower as a significant American art; through its defeat American dancers would be forced to continue indefinitely the bitter struggle for artistic freedom against economic conditions, against the commercial dictatorship of agents who prefer to take risks on foreign performers rather than native ones, and against the sterile dictates of dilettante patronage (35).

The Dance Observer's argument should have been a very forceful one to those involved in the pioneering stages of American modern dance. Obviously, dance was not taken seriously by the government when it formed the Federal Arts Projects; dancers had to organize and fight to have dance thought of as an art form on its own. The Dance Project brought modern dance to many Americans who otherwise would not have had exposure to this art form. Considering the dire economic state in the country, the Dance Project was pivotal in keeping modern dance alive in these, its early stages. The Coffee Bill and the Coffee-Pepper Bill both offered subsidy to dance as an independent and separate art form. Besides the opportunity for modern dance to grow

further, the independent recognition alone should have endeared the dance community to the Fine Arts Bills.

The dance community, especially the emerging modern dance community, would have benefitted greatly from permanent federal patronage. Yet members of the dance field shared the same fears other organizations had about the proposed legislation. They feared that relief would take precedence over quality. Many were especially worried about the existing WPA arts projects bureaucracy becoming permanent. This concern was valid, especially where dancers were concerned. As Jeanne Lunin Heyman pointed out in her article "Dance in the Depression: The WPA Project," the "interests of the dancers and choreographers were all too often lost in the labyrinth New Deal bureaucracy, swallowed up by the administrative problems of relief" (5/75; 38). Choreographers not only had their artistic work to contend with, but administrative duties also. According to Tamiris, after Becque resigned as director of the Dance Project, no other administrator was appointed and the choreographers had to perform those administrative duties (Roet 1949; 13).

The editor of Dance continued to object to the Fine Arts Bills. Besides the belief that a permanent Fine Arts Bureau would be a relief project, Milton did not like the idea of art being tied to a centralized bureaucracy with a resulting loss of individual enterprise (5/38; 16, 36).

Specifically, Milton was siding with the one dance faction that did finally become a voice of opposition to the Fine Arts Bills: the dance teacher profession. The dancing teachers' organizations opposed the Bills because they provided for classes at no or low fees and this could be unfair competition to independent teachers.

Whether or not valid objections existed about a proposed Fine Arts Bureau, what was most disconcerting was the fact that modern dancers did not make any serious attempt to get involved in the process of working out the problems of a proposed Bureau. Writing for the Dance Observer, Marjorie Church bemoaned the fact that:

the dance field, which of all fields, has the most to gain by the passage of such legislation, has expressed very little constructive sentiment on the matter, either pro or con. The most concerted voice from this quarter . . . has been the voice of the dancing teachers' organizations. Fearing government competition in their field . . . they have been unalterably opposed to this bill as it stands and have attacked it *in toto*. The American Dance Association (national) and the Dancers Federation of Los Angeles have endorsed the Coffee-Pepper Bill in principle, along with several other dancers' organizations in various parts of the country. From this point, however, the dancers themselves must now go further (Church 6&7/38; 86).

SIROVICH BILL

By May of 1938 the Coffee-Pepper Bill had died quietly. Representative Sirovich's amended Bill, representing the best features of past Bills, was the only remaining Fine

Arts Bill. On May 26, 1938 the Patents Committee of the House of Representatives sent Sirovich's Federal Arts Act to the entire House for consideration. According to Joy Pride, the Executive Director of the Federal Arts Committee, the Sirovich Bill took into consideration objections to the Coffee-Pepper Bill and took out the few clauses which caused the objections and thus it "contains no implication of complete transfer of the present Federal Arts Project or of organizational dominance" (6/15/38; 161). With just the Sirovich Bill to contend with, debate continued to rage primarily over the issue of "relief versus art."

Unfortunately, the dance field had little, if any, input into the Sirovich Bill. The Patents Committee held hearings on permanent federal subsidy of the arts for two years and during those years no dance representative ever testified (Milton 9/38; 10). On June 10, 1938 the House Rules Committee voted to send the Sirovich Bill to the floor for a vote. This same day the Federal Arts Committee and interested dancers, which included Tamiris, called a meeting to discuss and ascertain the concerted opinion of dancers on establishing a Fine Arts Bureau. Too little, too late is an understatement. It was probably with a measure of disgust in announcing this meeting in his column that John Martin wrote:

Such a conference obviously makes good sense, for

all that it is pretty well known that dancers do not have concerted opinions on any subject. No doubt there will be all but literal bloodshed before they can be brought to have any on this particular issue, but the Federal Arts Committee apparently believes that nothing can be gained by putting off the day of reckoning. Certainly if any issue is important enough to unite a notoriously disunited field, this should be it (6/5/38; IX:8).

This issue was apparently not important enough to unite the dance field; no general consensus was reached at the June 10, 1938 meeting of dancers, although the possibility of forming a committee to work out a program on which all dancers could agree was discussed (Dance 8/38; 9). Five days later the Sirovich Bill was defeated in the House of Representatives (N.Y. Times 6/16/38; 8). It is ironic that with all its past objections to the proposed Fine Arts Bureau Dance, in its September, 1938 issue, urged the formation of a council that represented all dance elements that could agree on amendments to the Sirovich Bill when Sirovich would reintroduce his Bill in 1939 (10). Again, here was a case of too little, too late.

The Sirovich Bill was never reintroduced in Congress, but on December 12, 1938, Dr. Walter Damrosch announced his Plan for a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts. Dr. Damrosch vehemently opposed the Coffee-Pepper and Sirovich Bills, but he believed the Bills showed that the American public favored a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts (Downes 12/18/38;

IX:9). In Damrosch's plan, dance was lumped together with the theatre. Perhaps a degree of vocal unity amongst dancers would have enlightened Dr. Damrosch to the fact that dance was and is an art unto itself. At any rate, Dr. Damrosch's plan never became legislation.

TAMIRIS' INPUT

Tamiris made known all along that she favored permanent federal support of dance and the other arts. As Chairman of the ADA, Tamiris tried to organize members of the dance field into making constructive criticisms about the proposed Federal Fine Arts Bureau (Schlundt 1972; 43). But there was only so much that Tamiris could do. Tamiris was arguably the busiest choreographer within the Dance Project. Since Becque's resignation, Tamiris had taken on more administrative duties in producing her work for the Dance Project.

Tamiris spent most of the summer of 1937 at Vassar participating in a course in theatre training for 40 Federal Theatre Project directors (Tamiris was the only dance representative chosen by Flanagan to participate) (Bentley 1988; 265). Upon her return from Vassar, Tamiris began work on her next production for the Federal Theatre Project, "Trojan Incident" and for a revival of her very successful piece "How Long, Brethren?" (Martin 9/19/37; X:8). The Federal Theatre presented Tamiris' "How Long, Brethren?"

along with four of her "Negro Spirituals" from December 21, 1937 to January 15, 1938 and her "Trojan Incident" was presented April 21, 1938 to May 31, 1938 (Schlundt 1972; 54, 57). Tamiris also performed in her dances. In addition, in July, 1938, Hallie Flanagan was invited to speak at the International Congress of the Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon on the Federal Theatre and Flanagan asked Tamiris to present her brief history of the Project (Flanagan 1940; 323).

With plenty of work and commitments already pressing her (her commitment to the Dance Project caused her to disband her own dance company), Tamiris continued to struggle for economic betterment of dancers, but the inability of dancers to unite prompted the frustrated Tamiris (still the Chairman of the ADA) to state, at a November 6, 1938 meeting of the ADA, that "the dance field in the United States is disorganized" and went on to say that the purpose of the meeting was "do you want an ADA?" (Cushing 12/38; 152). The members of the ADA believed that its existence was worthwhile and they would aim to work towards union protection of dancers and a strengthened ADA booking bureau. In addition, a committee (that included Tamiris) was appointed to plan a conference in early, 1939.

EFFECT OF FINE ARTS BILLS

It is doubtful that any of the Fine Arts Bills could have passed even if the dance world supported them in a

unified manner. The idea that any proposed Bureau of Fine Arts would make permanent the WPA arts projects already in place, in total or just partially, would never have received the support needed in Congress at this time. As a sign of the success of the New Deal programs, the Depression was easing and this signaled the beginning of the end of the New Deal:

The more successful the New Deal was, the more it undid itself. The more prosperous the country became, the more people returned to the only values they knew, those associated with an individualistic, success-oriented society (Leuchtenburg 1963; 273).

This philosophy of a success-oriented society was less sympathetic to unions and the Fine Arts Bills were supported by and consistently tied to unions. The work ethic upheld by a success-oriented society would not support a hand-out to artists or, perhaps, even consider art important to the work ethic.

In addition, any permanent Fine Arts Bureau had to distance itself from the relief projects. The passage of time proved to be the distance necessary for Congress to support federal subsidy of the arts.

Barring passage, the most important aspect of the Fine Arts Bills was the amount of discussion they caused. Both support and opposition were voiced in public forums and the media, thus the arts were given unprecedented public

exposure and thought in America. The magazine Theatre Arts Monthly described the situation best:

Discussion of the Coffee-Pepper and the Sirovich Bills . . . has done considerable service to the cause of art in America. Argument by advocates and opponents, both violent in their expression, has stimulated public thought on the subject to a new high point (4/38; 242).

The debate over the Fine Arts Bills included discussion of the accomplishments and merits of the Federal Arts Projects. If one had not seen the work of the Federal Arts Projects, one was at least bound to read about them in the numerous articles written about the Fine Arts Bills. Writing for Current History, V.F. Calverton argued that "no one can honestly deny that a large number of the Administration's projects have been of extraordinary value to the public" (6/38; 46). It is true that the Federal Arts Projects brought art to many people who had no previous exposure to the arts. With free or low cost admission, thousands of people throughout the country went to the theatre for the first time.

Thousands of people were also exposed to dance. Perhaps the most successful dance production was Tamiris' "How Long, Brethren?" The Federal Arts Projects kept meticulous records on attendance and records show that 24,235 people saw "How Long, Brethren?" during its first run (Schlundt 1972; 470).

"How Long, Brethren?" was originally presented with Charles Weidman's "Candide." There were forty-two performances of this production given to standing-room-only audiences. Critics and audiences alike were moved by "How Long, Brethren?"; it was often met with standing ovations and cheers. Dance Magazine gave Tamiris its annual award for best group choreography for "How Long, Brethren?" (Code 11/39; 280). Due to its success, "How Long, Brethren?" was revived and put on the same bill with four of Tamiris' "Negro Spirituals." Grant Code believed that this was the first time modern dance "put on a program unified both by one style of choreography and one subject matter throughout" (11/39; 280).

Dance, particularly modern dance, was just finding its place in American society and such successful productions as "How Long, Brethren?" and the many others produced by the Federal Dance Project helped secure that place. In addition, the dancers who formed the Dancers Association saw how a strong unified voice accomplished their goal of an independent Dance Project. It is unfortunate that the dancers could not stay unified in dealing with the Fine Arts Bills. Christena L. Schlundt, in her chronicle of Tamiris' career, points out that in the formative years of modern dance, modern dancers had a tendency to organize for specific issues and after success was achieved, the

organization was allowed to flounder (1972; 39). The Fine Arts Bills were too complex for the modern dancers to agree to and to successfully organize and lobby for passage. By this point, the ADA had lost its initial impetus.

The exposure of dance as a strong unified institution during this period would have done much to help establish dance as a serious art form, one that could stand side by side with visual art, literature, music and theatre. In addition, when dealing in the realm of politics, strength in numbers and unity is needed so as not to become easy prey to those involved in political intrigue. Regrettably the Federal Theatre Project with its Dance Unit soon became a pawn in some serious political maneuvering.

CHAPTER IV

DEMISE OF THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES INVESTIGATION

By 1938, the opponents of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal were gaining strength. According to William E. Leuchtenburg, a part of the loss of Roosevelt's power came from a fear of fascism (1960; 278). With the rise of Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Franco's Spain, fascism was a real threat in Europe and there were those in America who feared that Roosevelt had too much power and could become a despot. As part of the effort to lessen Roosevelt's power, opponents began to pick away at the New Deal programs.

In the Fall of 1938, the Federal Theatre Project became the target of Martin Dies and the House Un-American Activities Committee. The House Un-American Activities Committee was formed in the spirit of antifascism and anticommunism and Leuchtenburg believed that it "served the purposes of those who claimed the New Deal was a Red stratagem" (1960; 281). The Federal Theatre Project and its Dance Unit became victims of the Red Hunt. The Chairman of the House Committee Activities Committee, Representative Martin Dies, had sworn to rid the government of such subversives as Harry Hopkins (head of the WPA) and other "communists and fellow travelers" (Mathews 1967; 196). The first step in Dies' plan was to attack the Federal Theatre

Project as well as the Federal Writers Project.

Federal support of dance was tied to the fate of the Federal Theatre Project. The Federal Theatre Project had long been accused of having Communist ties because of its dealings with the Workers' Alliance and because some of the plays it produced dealt with social and economic problems. Theatre was the most visible of the Federal Arts Projects; paintings and books could be ignored, but in theatre, actors spoke on a stage and could not be ignored. The Federal Theatre received the most publicity of all the Arts Projects and this is one of the reasons it became the primary target of Roosevelt's opponents.

As discussed previously, since dancers did not have their own union to represent them with the WPA, they aligned themselves with the Workers' Alliance. In addition to the dancers, other unrepresented factions such as members of the Black and Jewish Theatre groups, the Living Newspaper research staff and the radio division joined the Alliance (Mathews 1967; 228). Alignment with the Workers' Alliance did not make individuals card-carrying Communists, although without a doubt some were. The Federal Theatre Project had to deal with the Workers' Alliance as it did with the seventeen other unions that represented various artists. If some of the Alliance members were Communists, the Federal Theatre could do nothing about it since WPA rules forbade

inquiry into religious or political faith (Lavery 8/4/38; 351).

It must also be kept in mind that in this era many looked to Communism and Socialism as viable routes to change. The country was in a serious economic depression and social injustices were commonplace. Radical political groups offered an attractive alternative to the problems America faced. These groups appealed to intellectuals and artists in particular:

The U.S.S.R. was regarded, in the 30's, as a huge experiment, conducted behind closed doors. Anyone who was lucky enough to visit Russia was eagerly interviewed on returning. People with progressive views regarded the only existing communist state as a mysterious chrysalis, in which . . . a brand new society was being created. It was their ardent--if naive--belief that the future was taking shape behind those closed doors (Manor 1985; 23).

In addition, radical political groups were willing to support actors and dancers who were concerned about the current political and social problems. Modern dance was a fledgling and non-mainstream art form, and in the early 1930's left-wing publications such as New Masses and New Theatre were about the only organizations that sponsored modern dance concerts (Manor 1985; 3, 4).

Many, particularly politicians in Washington, denounced the Workers' Alliance completely because of its ties to the Communist Party. But the cornerstone of the Workers'

Alliance programs was the demand for adequate relief measures, protection against evictions and foreclosures and later, legislation to promote work opportunities (Karsh & Garman 1957; 96). The causes of the Workers' Alliance were just and very appealing to victims of the Depression, Communist or not.

To compound matters, a lot of the politicians in Washington were troubled by the fact that many of the Federal Theatre Project plays, in particular the innovative Living Newspapers, dealt with social, political and economic issues. It is not the purpose of this study to examine the content of the Federal Theatre Project, however, it is sufficient to say that a number of the productions were controversial. As per Hallie Flanagan's philosophy, many of the productions were about American life, and in the 1930's American life included serious economic problems, social injustices and questions about government's role in society.

Federal Theatre Dance productions also explored social and political problems. For example, Don Oscar Becque's "Young Tramps" was a sociological study of the youth of the day and their discontent (Heyman 5/75; 35). Tamiris' work often delved into social and political issues (after the demise of the Federal Dance Project, Tamiris was suspect politically because of her work). As noted earlier, her "Salut au Monde" called for peace and unity among the races.

The popular suite of dance, "How Long, Brethren?" included a section about the Scottsboro case. In the Scottsboro case, nine young blacks were unfairly accused of raping two white girls and convicted on insufficient evidence (Warren 1991; 32-3). Also, the production of "How Long, Brethren?" included an all black choir.

History shows that in practice, the Federal Theatre Project provided great opportunities for blacks and for women. Blacks had their own theatre groups within the Project and launched many successful productions. According to J.C. Furnas, "the several black troupes' successes probably widened blacks' access to professional theatrical work as well as encouraged all-black theater as such" (1977; 415). In addition, the National Director (Hallie Flanagan) and a number of other top administrators were women. The lack of discrimination on the part of the Federal Theatre Project did not sit well with politicians from the South.

The combination of factors surrounding the Federal Theatre Project made it a prime target for the House Un-American Activities Committee. The House Un-American Activities Committee brought forth witnesses who swore that the Federal Theatre was run by Communists and its plays were Communist propaganda. Racial practices within the Project were criticized:

A further transgression on the part of that 'most

vicious' organization was implied by a small, blonde, Viennese-born actress who told the Committee that she had been asked for a 'date' by a Negro on the Project and that members of the Workers' Alliance hobnobbed 'indiscriminately' with Negroes as part of the Communist program for 'social equality and race merging' (Mathews 1967; 205).

The media widely reported all the inflammatory testimony against the Federal Theatre Project. The WPA refused to allow Hallie Flanagan to reply publicly to the accusations, thus, no defense of the Project was reported by the press (Flanagan 1940; 336).

The hearings by the House Committee on Un-American Committee on the Federal Theatre started in August of 1938 and Flanagan immediately requested the opportunity to testify. Flanagan was not allowed to testify until December and while Representative Dies had given great latitude to anti-WPA witnesses in their testimony, he was not foolish enough to give pro-administration witnesses, such as Flanagan, the same latitude (Mathews 1967; 217). This study will not go into further specifics of the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings (Jane DeHart Mathews provides an excellent account of the hearings in her book The Federal Theatre, 1935 - 1939: Plays, Relief, and Politics), but prospects for the Federal Theatre did not look good.

In January, 1939 Representative Dies presented his report on the House Un-American Activities Committee

investigations to Congress. Regarding the Federal Theatre Project, Dies said:

We heard some of the employees and former employees in the Federal Theatre Project in New York City. . . . From that testimony we conclude that a rather large number of the employees of the . . . Project are either members of the communist party or sympathizers with the communist party. It is also clear that certain employees felt under the compulsion to join the Workers' Alliance in order to retain their jobs (Mathews 1967; 225).

INVESTIGATION BY HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

The House Un-American Activities Committee

Investigation was just the first blow to the Federal Theatre in its fight for life. In the November, 1938 elections, Republicans scored well, a further signal that Franklin D. Roosevelt's power was on the wane and that the end of the New Deal was in sight (Leuchtenburg 1963; 271). In the Spring of 1939 the Federal Theatre was again investigated by Congress, this time by a sub-committee of the House Committee on Appropriations (Flanagan 1940; 348).

The Federal Theatre Project was caught between a rock and a hard place due to its work-relief status. When the Federal Theatre's productions were successful, the Project was accused of competing with commercial theatre. When production were not successful, the Project was reproached for wasting money.

During the protracted battle over whether or not to include the Federal Theatre in the upcoming Appropriations

Bill, the Federal Theatre was not only charged with competing with private industry, but also its productions were called everything from Communist propaganda, to lewd to vulgar and villainous. A number of the House Representatives had a problem with the racial policies of the Federal Theatre. As a specific example, the musical "Sing For Your Supper" (choreographed by Anna Sokolow) was criticized for allowing blacks and whites to mix and dance together (Mathews 1967; 265).

The press had a heyday in reporting the claims of the House investigation and once more the WPA administration did nothing to help the Federal Theatre. According to Leuchtenburg, Roosevelt realized that Congress was aggressively trying to dismantle the New Deal and decided to make some concessions so he let his opponents kill some of his least popular projects (1960; 272-3). As a result, Congress appropriated funds for the WPA with the provision that none of these funds be used "after June 30, 1939, for the operation of any Theatre Project" (Flanagan 1940; 362). Thus ended the first federal subsidy of theatre and dance.

DANCERS' ROLE IN DEMISE OF FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

Dance was not a major factor in the demise of the Federal Theatre Project. Although the musical "Sing For Your Supper" was a major target for criticism because of its interracial cast and prolonged rehearsal period, Congress

did not single out any other dance productions for criticism. Unfortunately, dance represented a small segment of the Federal Theatre Project in comparison to its other ventures.

Dancers were, however, a part of the group of Federal Theatre employees represented by the Workers' Alliance. In addition, dancers were very involved in protests and were highly visible in comparison to their proportions in the Project. The protest activity by the dancers brought even more attention to the Federal Theatre Project, eventually so much attention that Congress took notice.

Dancers organized and fought for an independent Dance Project, but somewhere along the line they lost steam. Dancers could have played a larger role in the campaign for permanent federal support of the arts and they played little, if any part in the battle to save the Federal Theatre Project. Dance was like a feather in the wind waiting and hoping that the wind would blow in the favor of the Federal Theatre. In its December, 1938 issue, Dance Observer editors expressed its hopes that:

With the rumors from Washington of pending WPA cuts, it is sincerely to be hoped that the dance division of the Federal Theatre, which is surely one of the most deserving and least publicized of the cultural activities sponsored by the government, will not be adversely affected. We trust these rumors are not well founded, that the good work of the Federal Theatre continue and develop rather than be stopped at a period when it

has not had the opportunity to evidence its full potentialities (12/38; 143).

While the above sentiments mean well in their hopes for dance, they are also naive and shortsighted. This statement was made during the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings on the Federal Theatre, where the very existence of the Federal Theatre was being threatened. Instead of just hoping that dance would not suffer, the editors should have urged their readers to bombard their Congressmen with letters objecting to the one-sided nature of the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings. Without a Federal Theatre Project, dance would no longer receive federal subsidy. It is understandable that one would be concerned primarily for one's own art form, but when that form is dependent on a bigger picture, it is wise to keep that picture in mind.

In the February, 1939 issue of Dance Observer an article appeared by Marjorie Church on the current status of the Federal Dance Theatre. Church provided a much more enlightened report on the Dance Theatre. First, Church reported that 65% of the personnel of the Dance Project of the Federal Theatre Project had been dismissed from WPA rolls on January 15 and further she bemoaned the lack of dance productions (171). Except for Doris Humphrey's "With My Red Fires," no dance productions had been performed since

mid-year 1938. Doris Humphrey's dance had been in rehearsal for over half a year before it was shown. "Sing For Your Supper" at this date had been in rehearsal for fourteen months.

No doubt delays and administrative inefficiency frustrated and disillusioned many of the dancers involved with the Project. Struggle for survival as individuals more than likely became more important than fighting for the life of the Federal Theatre Project. Nevertheless, with a view to the big picture, Church called on dancers to unite to fight to save the Dance Theatre and all of the WPA:

What will be done to save not only the Dance Theatre, but all the WPA projects, is dependent upon the honesty and humanity of us all. We might remind ourselves that the figure on unemployment is still in the neighborhood of 13,000,000; we might also remind ourselves that the projects have not only given employment to the needy, but have served the public in ways both cultural and practical. . . . So it is time that dancers enlisted their public in support of a solid program for federally sponsored dancing; it is time for the organizations in the field to get down to cases and take the lead in assisting these sorely-tried members of their profession; and it is time that all of us realized that broad aspects of what the projects mean in terms of a progressive democracy which is trying to keep its feet in the face of world upheaval (172).

In her article, Church mentioned that the ADA was a part of the Federation of Arts Unions on the Federal Theatre Project and that the Federation was trying to improve conditions on the Project (171). As stated earlier, at a

November, 1938 meeting Tamiris had considered discontinuing the ADA due to a state of disorganization (Dance Observer 12/38; 152). The ADA did continue its activities, including protesting budget cuts in the Dance Project. A two-day ADA conference was held on February 4 and 5, 1939 and the conference was constructed to attract as many dancers and dance public as possible (Dance Observer 2/39; 169).

At its February, 1939 conference, the ADA decided to concentrate on a three-point program: concentration on booking, a trade union and educational needs of the field (Church 3/39; 193). The ADA was no longer counting on federal sponsorship as the savior of dance; they were looking to help themselves.

Although the ADA seemed to choose a wise course, with the demise of the Federal Theatre Project and a war on the horizon the ADA faded into oblivion, making the ADA basically another single-issue organization that fell by the way side once the issue no longer existed.

At the ADA Conference, Tamiris was re-elected Chairman. At this point in time, Tamiris must have also felt a lot of frustration with the Dance Project. She had been rehearsing her new piece "Adelante" for quite some time with no projected opening date (Church 2/39; 171). In addition, many of her personnel for the dance were laid off. "Adelante" was eventually shown and was a critical success.

"Adelante" closed in May, 1939.

Shortly after the presentation of "Adelante," Congress withdrew funds for the Federal Theatre Project. The closing of the Federal Theatre found Tamiris without a school or group of dancers; she had given up everything to devote herself to the Federal Theatre. In addition, Tamiris was suspect politically for her previous associations with such organizations as New Masses and the Workers' Dance League. To add insult to injury, in the American sphere of dance, ballet was taking the forefront.

Yet, Tamiris had a sense of fulfillment in that through the auspices of the Federal Theatre, modern dance was seen by thousands who had never seen it before. Federal subsidy allowed the creation of such multi-art presentations as "How Long, Brethren?" "Trojan Incident" and "Adelante." Tamiris had no regrets:

The feeling of being wanted by the nation, paid for by the nation, along with other artists of the country a part of national life, the knowledge that modern dance was in the theater where it belonged, had meant something close to fulfillment for her (1949; 147).

Regrettably, dancers were not able to organize on a permanent basis to further the cause of dance and dancers. As John Martin wrote in his February 11, 1940 column for the New York Times:

The evidence continues to accumulate that the dance, like all the other arts that are dependent

upon group as against individual activity, demands establishment, organization, and, if necessary, subsidy for the realization of its potentialities (IX:3).

Dancers needed to realize that when dealing with the government, one must be organized to prevent art from becoming just a political pawn. In the case of the Federal Theatre Project, its own sponsors turned against it and artists just were not organized enough to fight. The Federal Arts Projects were the first opportunity for many artists to deal with the government and from this bitter experience they learned that they had to be united to have any chance for favorable treatment by the government. Unfortunately, a united front has not always been easily attained.

WPA'S ABANDONMENT OF THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT

A big factor in Congress' investigation of the Federal Theatre Project was the WPA's refusal to protect the Project. Did the Federal Theatre become a political pawn for the WPA also? Was it the sacrificial lamb? In his article, "Who Killed Federal Theatre?" Emmet Lavery accused Harry Hopkins of abandoning the WPA in order to save his own skin and provides some damning evidence of this (8/4/38; 352).

By mid-1937 Harry Hopkins' support for the Federal Theatre Project was waning. Hopkins became concerned about

his own political career and did not want to be associated with something that was politically suspect. Hopkins never once came to the defense of the Federal Theatre Project while it was being investigated by Congress, even though it was due almost solely to Hopkins that the arts were included in the WPA. In 1939 Hopkins was appointed Secretary of Commerce by Roosevelt, proving his political choices were correct.

While Hopkins' initial actions in helping create the Federal Arts Projects seem to be based on altruistic feelings, approval of the Federal Arts Projects by Congress was probably based more on a political decision. A number of theorists argue that the subsidy of art by the Federal government is based on political purposes.

Helen Townsend makes a good argument that one of the reasons the government provided subsidy to the arts through the WPA was to channel the energy of artists in the "right" direction (1985; 282). Artists were perceived as leaders: "they could promote unrest; they could also stimulate business" (Townsend 1985; 286). The creation of the Federal Arts Projects gave the government an opportunity to have some form of control over artists who had the potential to foment unrest and at the same time help stimulate business.

Obviously, the government was unable to channel actors' and dancers' energy in the "right" direction and thus

jettisoned them (the other three projects were not cut off at that time). The disastrous end to the Federal Theatre Project, as well as the inherent problems in the work-relief status of the Arts Projects damaged the prospects of future federal subsidy of the arts.

In the next two decades . . . New Deal art was the subject of almost ritual denunciations of the evils of government subsidies in general, and of public culture in particular. . . . Even proponents of public support for the arts dared not suggest the WPA projects as the model for a new federal program; indeed, they often explicitly disavowed the New Deal precedent (Mulcahy 1985; 316).

TAMIRIS' POST FEDERAL DANCE THEATRE CAREER

Tamiris had to struggle to continue her dance career. She rented a large basement and converted it into a studio theatre and gradually reassembled her group and re-opened her school. She presented some of her work at night clubs (that's where the money was).

Tamiris did not give up her belief that dance could play an important role in American society. In 1943 she choreographed for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's play "It's Up to You," which was designed to popularize meat rationing during the war. Tamiris also appeared in that production as Porterhouse Lucy, the Black Market Steak. In 1944 Tamiris put together a barnstorming dance revue to help re-elect Franklin Roosevelt. Although the tour was grueling, Tamiris said "the exciting thing about this tour,

was the knowledge that the dance could be part of something as important as helping to elect a president" (Lloyd 1949; 150).

In 1944, Tamiris started a new phase of her career, she began to choreograph for Broadway productions. This phase lasted for 10 years. She was very successful on Broadway, working on such shows as "Up in Central Park," the revival of "Showboat," "Annie Get Your Gun," "Inside U.S.A." and "Touch and Go," for which she won a Tony award for best choreography in 1949.

Tamiris was still led by a strong sense of fairness. Throughout her career, Tamiris tried to purge racial discrimination, and her career on Broadway was not any different. Her dancing corps were mixed racially long before it was fashionable. Also, Tamiris retained her firm belief in cooperative action. Along with choreographer Agnes De Mille, she approached Actors' Equity on behalf of choreographers and dance directors for admittance to the union (Variety 9/27/47). Tamiris became one of the founders of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Union (Siegel 1979; 42).

Tamiris did return to the modern dance world. In 1960 she and her husband, Daniel Nagrin, formed the Tamiris-Nagrin Dance Company (although she no longer performed). Tamiris had not let go of her idea that modern dance could

flourish if artists joined together. In the late 1950's, Tamiris worked with Doris Humphrey to establish a permanent repertory company for modern dance. The repertory company would have been a repository for the classic works of Humphrey, Tamiris and Martha Graham along with some of their younger colleagues, such as José Limón and Merce Cunningham, as well as a showcase for new works (Terry 10/25/64; 35). Humphrey's death brought an end to the project. The idea, though, did not die. The New York State Council on the Arts sponsored the New American Dance Theater, which was a contemporary dance repertory company under the artistic direction of José Limón. Tamiris was to choreograph for the company in its second presentation (Terry 2/28/65; 33). The company did not survive and Tamiris died of cancer in August, 1966.

What never died in Tamiris was her sense of fairness. She was concerned with truth and justice. When interviewed by Walter Terry in September, 1965, Tamiris said that the truth that concerned her was the truth of the times and its manifestations. The Depression manifested itself with millions of dancers in the streets without work and this truth concerned Tamiris and she did something about it.

Research reveals that Tamiris was modest in her reflections about herself. She was willing to discuss her choreography, but she did not speak of the great benefits

her work as an advocate of dance and dancers brought. Truly a reflection of her sense of fairness, she was not one to brag, but those around her could not help but see that her guiding principle was fairness and she dedicated her considerable energy into trying to realize that principle. At her funeral, José Limón read a tribute to Tamiris, and in part it said:

You were a dedicated artist and also compassionate and a humanist. You cared whether your fellow man had enough to eat a decent wage and place to live, and whether he was treated with justice and with dignity. You abhorred those who would tyrannize and enslave the human mind and spirit. You were a kind and general Friend. You made us who knew you kinder and more generous by your example. I am here to celebrate your courage, your steadfastness and, above all, your high heart and your gallantry (8/7/66).

The life of Helen Tamiris was an attempt to make the world better for dancers and all oppressed people. In the face of critics and bitter disappointments, she continued her work with the belief that she could make a difference. Tamiris did make a difference, for the better.

CONCLUSION

Helen Tamiris believed that dancers had the right to work in their field and further that they were entitled to support from their government. Tamiris dedicated all of her energy to fighting for her beliefs. Of all the dancers involved with the Federal Dance Project, she was the only one to give up her company and her school so she could fully devote herself to what she believed in.

Tamiris' tenacity was instrumental in the creation of the Federal Dance Project and in the creation of the Dancers Association and the American Dance Association. Tamiris' beliefs were in tune with Hallie Flanagan's. Flanagan's trust of Tamiris is evidenced by the important responsibilities given to Tamiris. At first the government was willing to allow Flanagan and Tamiris to act upon their beliefs. When it became evident that acquiescence with Flanagan's policies was a political liability, government severed its relationship with the Federal Theatre Project.

At this point in the history of the United States, people were still in the process of learning about the power of organization. With the advent of the Federal Arts Projects and the continuing battle for their funding, artists learned to organize not only within their field but with artists in other fields.

Modern dance was still an infant art in the 1930's, but

it was forced to grow up faster in fighting for its needs. Tamiris played a large role in helping her field realize the power and potential of organization (it took many years for that lesson to fully take hold).

The first permanent federal organization for subsidy of the arts was not created until 1965 when the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities was founded (of which the National Endowment of the Arts is a part). The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) was set up so as to avoid the problems inherent in the Federal Arts Projects. The NEA was to have a limited scope and was not to identify with any one particular aesthetic judgment (Mulcahy 1985; 317).

According to Gary O. Larson, author of "From WPA to NEA: Fighting Culture with Culture," even the NEA grew out of political reasons. Larson effectively argues that the NEA owes its roots more to Cold War cultural diplomacy, culture as propaganda, than to the arts projects of the WPA (1985; 294). The NEA grew out of politicians' desires to make America look as culturally developed as the Soviet Union.

The NEA is structured in such a way as to avoid becoming a point of controversy. Grant decisions are made by a panel system which was intended to insulate the NEA from political interference and censorship (Mulcahy 1985; 321). Unfortunately, the NEA has not avoided political

interference and attempts at censorship. One of the lessons taught by the Federal Arts Projects was with government subsidy come individuals ready to use those Projects for political purposes. One of the reasons members of Congress attacked the Federal Theatre Project was because it was a convenient and easy way to start to dismantle Roosevelt's New Deal and erode his power. As Russell Lynes wrote in describing the activities of politicians (such as Martin Dies and Richard Nixon) who singled out certain art as being subversive:

It was not their anticommunist stance that mattered in the long run; it was the obvious fact that when politicians undertook to play a role in the arts, it was to score political points, and the credibility of the government as a disinterested patron, ready to consign matters of art to those who know and care about them, was cast into shadow (1985; 421).

Beginning about 1990 the NEA came under attack by various members of Congress over the type of art it had been supporting. Some politicians wanted to put restrictions on artistic content and succeeded in having the NEA issue anti-obscenity guidelines for their grant recipients.⁴ Again, politicians used government subsidy of the arts as a political tool to gain recognition for themselves.

In this battle over government funding of the arts, artists from all fields organized and fought for their rights. Bella Lewitzky, artistic director of the Bella

Lewitzky Dance Company in Los Angeles, refused to sign the anti-obscurity guideline, thereby turning down a NEA grant. Lewitzky, with support from People for the American Way, filed suit against the NEA charging that the guidelines were an "unconstitutional limitation on her free expression" (Parachini 6/15/90; 1). Lewitzky won her lawsuit. It is interesting to note that in the 1930's Lewitzky was a dancer with the Los Angeles Dance Unit of the Federal Theatre Project.

Unfortunately, in 1992 the NEA was still under attack by conservative politicians who now wanted the NEA abolished. Artists must stay vigilant to insure that if the government sides with the views of someone, it should side with a more enlightened viewpoint. Washington Post columnist David Broder provides such a viewpoint:

Of course, some of the stuff the NEA funds is offensive--to me, or you, or somebody else. But the notion that this nation will be damaged or degraded by a single subsidized sculpture or sonnet is a neurotic confession of distrust in ourselves. . . . As for the famous argument that "I don't want my tax dollars going to pay for . . ." whatever, the answer is clear. I don't want my tax dollars going to soldiers who kill their comrades with "friendly fire" or to cops who punch out a manacled suspect--but I don't therefore favor abolishing the police force or shutting down the Pentagon. Bureaucracies make mistakes. The NEA has made fewer than most. But a nation that cannot afford to finance its arts--even the occasionally tasteless or offensive variety--is a nation that has lost its perspective, its self-confidence and its soul (3/11/92; 7B).

Dance, indeed all the arts, needs to realize that the government rarely involves itself with the arts for altruistic purposes. The dance world needs to be organized and alert to political intrigues in order for their art to thrive. The dance world needs to remain vigilant to forestall future attacks on artistic freedom which is vital to the growth of dance and all the arts.

In addition, the dance field (as well as the other arts) needs to give recognition and support to individuals within their field, like Tamiris, who make sacrifices to fight for the rights of artists. This contribution is just as important as a creative contribution.

NOTES

¹ Most texts gave 1905 as the year that Tamiris was born, but in her autobiographical draft she states she was born in 1902 (Tamiris 1989-90; 4).

² A staff was appointed (that included Don Oscar Becque as Director and choreographers) and guidelines were set forth for the operation of the Dance Project. Auditions for dancers were held in August, 1936, but Becque ordered project dancers to be re-auditioned in September, causing a furor. Part of the problem with the Dance Project was that artistic goals were never fully clarified. For more details, see Jeanne Lunin Heyman's "Dance in the Depression: The WPA Project."

³ "The dance" is what came to be called "modern dance."

⁴ Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina has led the attack on the NEA by bringing attention to a few controversial artists who have been supported by the NEA. Helms purports that the work of these artists is obscene and/or immoral.

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