

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Sidney Kingsley pillories the munitions makers—Some new films and the Jooss ballet

IT IS some years now since *Fortune's* article "Arms and the Man" stood our hair on end by declaring that to a large extent the World War was a coöperative venture arranged by the munitions makers of the combatant Powers, and that their governments and general staffs scrupulously carried out the gentlemen's agreement entered into by French Schneider and German Krupp to prevent either of their valuable properties being damaged by the "enemy"—an agreement which not only preserved intact their fixed assets, but also had the pleasant feature of prolonging the war and consequently the flow of fat profits. The article was republished as a pamphlet, its essence appeared as a section of the movie *March of Time*, and its soul has gone marching on through a number of other media.

Its latest incarnation is in *Ten Million Ghosts*, the play written, directed, and produced by Sidney Kingsley, author of the previously successful *Men in White* and *Dead End*. The action opens shortly before the outbreak of the World War and closes in 1927. The story revolves around a munitions-making family (the French branch of which is de Kruif, the German branch of which is von Kruif) and how through the prompting of Zacharey, the brain guy of the firm, the two branches arrange for their mines, close to the frontier on each side, to be immune from the attacks which would be normal military strategy. When the war breaks out, the young French aviator, who is in love with the daughter of old de Kruif, is sent to the Briey sector. His squadron is under orders not to bomb the German iron mine which they can see working day and night turning out the sinews of the German attackers. He tries to organize his squadron to bomb the mine despite orders, but the memory of the French firing-squad which ended a previous similar attempt is too fresh; his comrades won't dare it. So he tries it alone, in the hope that his clear-eyed newspaper correspondent friend, who works for the publisher who brought on the Spanish-American War, will tell the story of his death and awaken the world. As we know from history, it didn't turn out that way. The play closes at an arms conference in Geneva in 1927, with the newspaperman announcing to Zacharey and old de Kruif that they can "break" him on his paper if they like, but that he will fight them and their racket till he dies. "And," significantly remarks the daughter who was to have married the aviator, "this time he won't be alone."

It's a powerful theme, handled with considerable vigor, and if it continues to meet with the response it received the opening night, may run long enough to have a far-reaching and salutary effect. There are weaknesses in the characterizations and in the love story, but the

force of the situations and the interest of the theme go far to obliterate these defects.

A. W. T.

THE SCREEN

SOME years ago Harry Alan Potamkin pointed out that our comedians were far superior to our directors of film comedy. How true this is today is illustrated by the fact that the Marx brothers are still waiting for a decent film and a competent director; or that *Sing Baby Sing* could have been an extraordinary film had it been directed and written with skill. But the best illustration of this pathological condition in the American comedy film is offered us in Paramount's *The Big Broadcast of 1937*—which, like a new model of a radio or a car, was presented ahead of its release date. What the producers had on their hands was a crew of expensive (and many good) entertainers. In addition there were a couple of good gag men. And what to do about it? Well, there is an extraordinary machine called an optical printer, which will do more photographic tricks than all the ingenious cameramen in Hollywood put together. So they let the comedians do their stuff and the separate sequences were joined together with nice, new shiny optical tricks. In other words, you won't find this a motion picture in any sense of the word, but you will find Gracie Allen, Jack Benny, Bob Burns all very funny; you will be disappointed that Benny Goodman is interrupted by tricky camera work, and that Stokowski has been photographed in a way that will scare little children and thrill old maids. But the Bach (surprisingly enough) comes over remarkably well.

Adventure in Manhattan (Columbia) is a thin comedy about the perennial mythical Hol-

lywood newspaper man with a little of *Mr. Deeds* thrown in for good measure. On the other hand *The Magnificent Brute* (Universal), starring Victor McLaglen, which is a story about steel workers, is one of the most disgusting, libelous, and cheap examples of the so-called "he-man" type of film comedy that has come along in many months. Finally, you will find Irwin (Bury the Dead) Shaw's initial effort in Hollywood an ordinary football yarn called *The Big Game* (R.K.O.-Radio).

PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

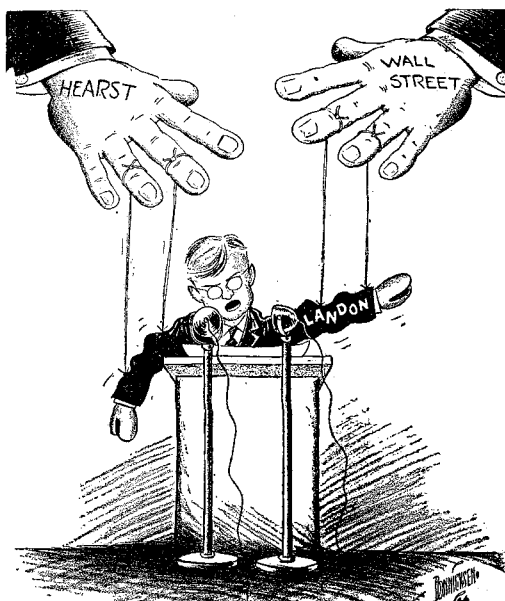
KURT JOOSS and his European Ballet, now of Dartington Hall, Cornwall, England, which opened the New York dance season and now is on tour around the country, their repertory substantially intact, presented for the first time the not too fortunate *The Prodigal Son*.

"Based on the Biblical story," the legend runs through the familiar pattern, "rags to riches and back again," prosaic, dull, and inept. If there was some profounder motif in the composition, it was pretty much buried in heavy pantomime and obvious caricature.

Kurt Jooss is no mean choreographer; he has a sharp wit and a keen social sense; and his troupe is technically well equipped, Noelle de Mosa, Ernst Uthoff, and Hans Zuellig, especially; but *The Prodigal Son* is someone's ostrich head safely grooved in some intellectual sand; and not much breath in it.

After *The Green Table*, the prize-winning satire on top-hat diplomacy, and after Hitler made completely necessary the transfer of the entire Ballet to healthier climates, one might reasonably have expected a more vigorous approach to its work. Cornwall is not so far from London and Mosley's blackshirts that Jooss must turn to the Bible for "basic problems."

OWEN BURKE.



The Radio

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups. Readers are asked to report at once any anti-working-class bias expressed by these artists or their sponsors.)

FORTHCOMING BROADCASTS

Earl Browder, Mon., Nov. 2, 10:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue.
Norman Thomas, Sun., Nov. 1, 4:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue.
"Mother" Bloor, Fri., Oct. 30, 11 p.m., N.B.C. red.
Theater Collective. Winding up the series of weekly programs sponsored by the International Workers Order, supplemented by the I.W.O. symphony and mandolin orchestras. Thursday, Oct. 29, WCFL, Chicago, 8:30 p.m.

ELECTION RETURNS

Columbia. Beginning at 6 p.m. Tues., Nov. 3, Columbia announcers will break in at will to announce such early election returns as are avail-

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able. After 8 p.m. Columbia will take five minutes from each half-hour program to give returns. Beginning at 10:30, returns will continue uninterrupted until a president is elected. *National Broadcasting Co.* Beginning at 7:15, Tues., Nov. 3, the red and blue networks will give five minutes every half hour to election returns.

FOOTBALL

Minnesota-Northwestern. Sat., Oct. 31, 1:45 p.m. Columbia.

Fordham-Pittsburgh. Sat., Oct. 31, 1:45 p.m. N.B.C. blue.

Yale-Dartmouth. Sat., Oct. 31, 2 p.m. Mutual.

REGULAR FEATURES

Beethoven Sonata Series. Alexander Semmler, pianist. Sundays. 10:30 a.m., Columbia.

Seattle Symphony Orchestra, with Cameron conducting, Thursdays at 8 p.m., Columbia.

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Barlow conducting. Sundays at 3 p.m., Columbia.

Fred Astaire and Johnny Green's Orchestra. Tuesdays at 9:30 p.m., N.B.C. red.

André Kostelanetz's Orchestra. Wednesdays at 9 p.m. and Fridays at 8:30 p.m. Columbia.

Rudy Vallée's Varieties. Thursdays at 8 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Eddie Cantor and others. Sundays at 8:30 p.m., Columbia. Rebroadcast to West Coast, 11 p.m.

Burns and Allen. Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m., Columbia.

Willie and Eugene Howard. Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Stoopnagle and Budd. Wednesdays at 9 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Raymond Gram Swing, commenting on international affairs. Fridays at 9 p.m., Mutual.

The March of Time. Thursdays, 10:30 p.m., Columbia.

The Screen

IMPORTANT OPENING

Nightingale, the Soviet Union's first film in color. Opens at Cameo, N. Y., Monday, Nov. 2.

WORTH SEEING

The Devil Is a Sissy. Some clever kids up to high jinks.

The Gay Desperado. Mamoulian directs some enjoyable if synthetic gayety.

Valiant Is the Word for Carrie. Gladys George in a more-or-less credible and well-acted story of a prostitute.

Millions of Us, a fine labor short on the bill at the Cameo in N. Y. Closes Sunday, Nov. 1. Watch for it in your locality.

Nine Days a Queen. Nova Pilbeam and Cedric Hardwicke in a film about Lady Jane Grey.

The Theater

THUMBS UP

It Can't Happen Here. Sinclair Lewis's book done into a play by various authors, at the following theaters: Adelphi, N. Y.; Majestic, Brooklyn; Jefferson, Birmingham, Ala.; Mayan and Figueroa (Yiddish), Los Angeles; Columbia, San Francisco; Baker, Denver; Park, Bridgeport, Conn.; Palace, Hartford, Conn.; Blackstone, Chicago; Keith, Indianapolis; Repertory, Boston; Lafayette, Detroit; City, Newark, N. J.; Warburton, Yonkers, N. Y.; Carter, Cleveland; Moore, Seattle; Scottish Rite, Tacoma.

Gilbert & Sullivan (Martin Beck, N. Y.). The Rupert D'Oyly Carte company in superlative production of the Savoy operettas. *The Pirates of Penzance*, which will continue through Saturday, Oct. 31, will be followed by a week's run of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Ten Million Ghosts (St. James, N. Y.). A vigorous play about munitions makers by the author of *Men in White and Dead End*.

Tovarich (Plymouth, N. Y.). Slightly slanderous but very entertaining comedy with a swell cast, including a newcomer, Marta Abba.

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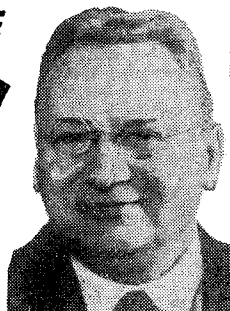
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