

# SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

"Der Kampf" and some home-grown products—The Modern Museum opens a show

**D**ER KAMPF (*The Struggle*) was filmed in Russia, written, directed and acted by German exiles. Georgi Dimitrov and Henri Barbusse appear in it as themselves, Barbusse in a single sequence, Dimitrov in several. Documentary shots of the Reichstag trial and its attendant demonstrations are used throughout with splendid effect. Conceived as a sweeping arraignment of the Nazis, the picture is built around the Reichstag fire and the substantially similar burning of a camouflaged munitions factory in a small town near Berlin. In the constant shifting from the small-town people's story to generalized Nazi brutality the picture becomes unwieldy and, at times, confusing. The fact that in spite of this *Der Kampf* remains absorbing and vivid should be attributed to the essential credibility of most of its characters, fine acting, Dimitrov's electric presence, and many careful touches.

Possibly an exposition of the Nazis' hold on the German people was outside the scope of this movie, but even so, the almost exclusive emphasis on the storm troopers' brutality vitiates some of its effect. At the same time, we know that the brutality exists and that, in the case of the particular characters affected, it is certainly not exaggerated. Goebbels's current threat of more such brutality as well as Ernst Thaelmann's continued imprisonment add a tragic and intense timeliness to *Der Kampf*. Dimitrov is free and in the leadership of the Communist International, but the Mother Lemkes and Fritz Lemkes of this picture are still in Dresden and Nuremberg.

Mother Lemke might be said to derive from Gorky's *Mother*; actually, she derives from the thousands of working-class mothers who are taking reading lessons from their sons in Moscow, selling Scottsboro buttons in New York, cooking for the militia in the Guadarrama mountains, and doing all the things Mother Lemke does in *Der Kampf*. She is such a universal type it would have been almost forgivable had the characterization smacked of the banal, but in the hands of Lotte Loebinger it is endowed with great beauty and individuality. The same holds true in regard to Fritz Lemke, whose all-absorbing preoccupation with football gives way to revolutionary activity through a logical progression of events and reactions.

And it isn't that Lotte Loebinger is a better actress than Anna Sten, or Bruno Schmitsdorf superior to Spencer Tracy, say. And it isn't simply that Hollywood makes wax dolls of its actresses, and fashion plates or animated blackjacks of its actors. Every line that Fritz and Mother Lemke were given called for sincerity and conviction, for the best that either of them had, and in their case that best is very good.



For American audiences, particularly outside New York, *Der Kampf* will undoubtedly be quite a problem. Much of the picture is predicated on the assumption that the spectator is familiar with the personalities and significance of Dimitrov and Barbusse, with the role of Nazi industrial commissars, the split between Communists and Social Democrats, soccer, Marinus Van der Lubbe, camouflaged munitions factories. Probably most of the irony in Dimitrov's quoting Goethe at his accusers will be lost on the mythical "average man." But there is so much else, the fundamental progress of the film is so unmistakable and effective, that the inadequate distribution which awaits it seems criminal. As for New Yorkers, they can and should see it at the Cameo. It is incomparably the best show in town.

EDWARD NEWHOUSE.

**T**HE time has come when it is necessary for Hollywood to disguise the gangster film as "social propaganda." Under the false guise of exposing the milk racket, *Sworn Enemy* (M.-G.-M.) is nothing more than the exposition of a feud between the underworld king, Joe Emerald (is it Legs Diamond?) played by Joseph Calleia, and Dr. Cattle (Lewis Stone). Like most of the films of the same type, it is physically exciting and as stimulating as second-rate pulp fiction.

*Criboulette* at the Cinema de Paris is a careful and enjoyable film version of the well known nineteenth century musical comedy.

*Walking On Air* (R.K.O.-Radio) is another musical with those two blonde ingenues, Ann Sothorn and Gene Raymond. The story is old and it doesn't matter. But the production is so unpretentious and so well handled that it provided a pleasant surprise. It will be found on a double-feature bill at the R.K.O. and Skouras circuits.

*Sing Baby Sing* (20th Century-Fox) contains so many good comics, including Adolphe Menjou, Patsy Kelly, Gregory Ratoff, and Ted Healy, that it finally emerges as a better-than-average comedy with music. For the most part, the film is a cross-country chase, with an ex-chorus girl (Alice Faye) running after a movie actor with Shakespearean pretensions (Menjou). If your suspicious nature should

lead you to suppose that this story is based on recent real-life events in the life of the handsome member of a famous acting family, who are we to contradict you? PETER ELLIS.

## FINE ARTS

**T**HE Museum of Modern Art in New York this week opened its first exhibition for the 1936-37 season, *New Horizons in American Art*. The exhibition will be on view through Monday, October 12. Outstanding work by artists all over the country on the Federal Art Project has been selected by the museum and includes not only paintings, sculpture, murals, graphic arts, and children's work, but also a large selection of work done by artists on the Index of American Design. The exhibition fills three and one-half floors of the Museum. Although selections have been made on the basis of quality alone, without regard to regional representation, all sections of the country are represented. Most of the exhibit are the work of artists unknown or little known to New York. This is the third exhibition of "government" art at the Museum.

Saturday, September 19, will see the closing of the exhibition of the American Art Group at the Weyhe Gallery, New York. This showing of new etchings, woodcuts, lithographs includes many NEW MASSES tributors, and includes such artists as George Biddle, Jean Charlot, Nicolai Cikovsky, Carrubias, Adolf Dehn, Ernest Fiene, Wang Gág, William Gropper, Rockwell Kent, Ysuo Kuniyoshi, J. J. Lankes, John Marin, Reginald Marsh, Rudolph Ruzicka, Ralph Soyer and many others.

The American Artists Group, whose first exhibition this is, was organized "specifically" to take the snobbishness out of the art business; to make contemporary graphic work available in quantity and at prices with reach of persons of moderate means."



## Phonograph Recordings POPULAR

**Billie Howard and Her Orchestra.** The Negro blues singer gives us something exceptional in own "Billie's Blues" coupled with "Summertime," from *Porgy and Bess* (Vocalion 3288).

**Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra.** The young pianist and a competent band play "You Turn the Tables on Me" and "Sing Baby Sing," the film of that name (Brunswick 7736). Other Brunswick tunes to which a number has not been assigned is "Here's Love in Your Ear" and "You Came to My Rescue."

**Fred Astaire and Johnny Green's Orchestra.** Jerome Kern tunes from *Swing Time* on Brunswick disks: "Pick Yourself Up" and "Way You Look Tonight" (7717) and "Gonna Dance" and "Bojangles of 1" (7718).

**Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra.** TI recordings, "Shoe-Shine Boy" (with "Si

Sing" on Victor 25375), "Knock Knock" (with "Until Today" on Victor 25373), and "Jintown Blues" (with "You Can Depend on Me" on Victor 25379) are good, but not quite up to the older "Stealin' Apples" and "Grand Terrace Swing" (Vocalion 3213) and "Blue Lou" (with "Christopher Columbus" on Vocalion 3211).

## CLASSICAL

**Mozart.** Huberman and the Vienna Philharmonic under Issay Dobrowen give a new rendition of the G major violin concerto (Columbia Masterworks Album 258).

**Schubert.** Schnabel and members of the Pro Arte String Quartet, assisted by Alfred Hobday on the string bass, play the "Trout" quintet. (Victor Masterpiece Album 312).

**Beethoven.** Egon Petri's American recording debut in the C minor sonata, Opus 3, proves a notable success, including the authentic reproduction of piano tone (Columbia Masterworks Album 263).

**Brahms.** The Pro Arte Quartet, plus Anthony Pini as second cello and Hobday playing the bass, in a distinguished performance of the rarely heard sextet for strings (Victor Masterpiece Album 296).

**Bach.** A sound interpretation of the Twelve Small Preludes, arranged for harpsichord, by that outstanding practitioner, Yella Pessl (Columbia 170634).

## The Radio

## FORTHCOMING BROADCASTS

**James W. Ford,** Communist vice-presidential candidate, 10:45 p.m., Monday, Sept. 21, N.B.C. red network.

**Earl Browder, Norman Thomas, William J. Lemke, Aubrey Williams and others.** Speaking from the Waldorf-Astoria in New York in one of a series of political "conferences" staged by the New York Herald Tribune, 10 to 11:15 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 23, N.B.C. blue network.

**Master-General Farley, Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, Herbert Hoover, John D. M. Hamilton, W. S. Hutcheson, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, and others.** In another Herald Tribune conference, 3 to 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 23, N.B.C. red and blue networks.

## REGULAR FEATURES

(Times given are Eastern Daylight Saving, but all programs are on coast-to-coast hook-ups. Readers are asked to report once any anti-working-class bias expressed by any of these artists or their sponsors.)

**ile Symphony Orchestra,** with Cameron conducting, Thursdays at 8 p.m., Columbia network.

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

**runa Castagna,** Saturdays at 9 p.m., Columbia network.

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

**ndré Kostelanetz's Orchestra,** Fridays at 10 p.m., Wednesdays at 9 p.m., Columbia network.

**udy Vallée's Varieties.** Thursdays at 8 p.m., N.B.C. red network.

**aring's Pennsylvanians.** Fridays at 9 p.m., N.B.C. blue network.

**ul Whiteman's Orchestra.** Sundays at 9:15 p.m., N.B.C. blue network.

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

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

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

**The March of Time.** Monday through Friday evenings at 10:30, until Friday, Sept. 25; Columbia network.

## The Theater

## OPENING SCHEDULED

**Reflected Glory** (Morosco, N. Y.). A play by George Kelly, author of *Craig's Wife* and *The Show-Off*, with Tallulah Bankhead, planned to open Sept. 21.

## THUMBS UP

**Boy Meets Girl** (Cort, N. Y.). Sam and Bella Spewack's pretty funny comedy of Hollywood.

**Dead End** (Belasco, N. Y.). Sometimes effective realism by Sidney Kingsley, set in New York's slums.

**The Emperor's New Clothes** (Adelphi, N. Y.). W.P.A. players in the delicious old folk tale.

**Gilbert & Sullivan** (Martin Beck, N. Y.). The Rupert D'Oyly Carte company in superlative production of the Savoy operettas. *The Yeomen of the Guard*, which will continue through Saturday, Sept. 19, will be followed by a week's run of *Iolanthe*.

**Idiot's Delight** (Shubert, N. Y.). Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne romping through Robert Sherwood's anti-war comedy.

**Injunction Granted!** (Biltmore, N. Y.). The Living Newspaper W.P.A. project in an episodic history of American labor struggles.

**On Your Toes** (Imperial, N. Y.). A couple of Rodgers and Hart songs and Ray Bolger's dancing make an enjoyable evening.

**Tobacco Road** (Forrest, N. Y.). Jack Kirkland's dramatization of Erskine Caldwell's story of the poor whites.

## The Screen

## WORTH SEEING

**The General Died at Dawn.** Clifford Odets's first screen play, with Gary Cooper and Madeleine Carroll.

**Der Kampf.** A new Amkino offering at the Cameo, N. Y., picturing Dimitrov's trial by the Nazis. Reviewed in this issue.

**Swing Time.** Dancing by Astaire and Rogers and comedy by Helen Broderick and Victor Moore save the day.

**Romeo and Juliet.** Enough Shakespeare to make worth while an otherwise stogy effort.

## FAIR AND COOLER

**The Last of the Mohicans.** American history in a setting replete with nobility and war-whoops.

**To Mary—with Love.** Myrna Loy and Warner Baxter in a film showing how the boom and the depression shook a home.

**The Gorgeous Hussy.** Joan Crawford (with Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, and others) renouncing love for Jacksonism.

**Girls' Dormitory.** Introducing a new star, Simone Simon, in a somewhat feeble echo of *Maedchen in Uniform*.

## The Art Galleries

## NEW YORK

**Brooklyn Museum.** Water colors and oils in a special showing of California artists. Also on show are book illustrations and other things from Persia, India, and Bali.

**Municipal Art Committee.** Exhibition of works of New York artists at the temporary gallery of the Committee, 62 West Fifty-third Street.

**Winslow Homer, Childe Hassam, A. P. Ryder, George Innes, and other Americans.** Babcock gallery, 38 East Fifty-seventh Street.

## BOSTON

**Japanese Art.** A special loan exhibition is on view at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

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