

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

A film story of Zola and the Dreyfus case—Some recent books on the dance

DURING the so-called "dog days" of the American motion picture there were a few really great films produced. Important both as examples of cinema art and as social documents, they never grow out of date. That masterpiece of terrifying realism, *Greed*, obviously comes to mind. But even more extraordinary is Thomas Ince's *The Italian*, produced in 1914, which must be recorded as one of the finest social films ever made. These films were usually made by individual artists who turned to the cinema as a means of expression. When finance capital converted the movies into a motion picture industry, the largest and most efficient in the world, it became increasingly difficult for progressive artists to express themselves.

During the past few years, however, very few men have been able to make films that were different from the usual run of the mill. These men influenced certain producers. Some of them realized that "social" films not only added to the prestige of the company, but that they also made money. At least they did not lose any. Warner Bros. is such a company. They have specialized in what has been called "headline" films. The series began with *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang*. All of these including *They Won't Forget* are muck-raking films. That is good, for we need that type of film. They are, in a sense, reformist and tell their story through the process of individual development.

With *The Life of Emile Zola* the Warner Brothers inaugurate a new era in the film industry. For the first time a commercial producer has given us a film with a broad political idea. It is a dignified and stirring motion picture. Although the film is based on the life of Zola (played by Paul Muni who is superb), it is not purely biographical. His arguments with Cézanne, his literary squabbles, his personal life, are all secondary to the idea expressed by Zola himself toward the end of the film:

To save Dreyfus we had to challenge the might of those who dominate the world. It is not the swaggering militarists! They're but puppets that dance as the strings are pulled! It is those others, those who would ruthlessly plunge us into the bloody abyss of war to protect their power. . . . Thousands of children sleeping peacefully tonight under the roofs of all the world! Doomed to die horribly under some titanic battlefield unless it can be prevented! And it can be prevented! The world must be conquered, but not by force of arms, but by ideas that liberate. Then we can build it anew, build for the humble and the wretched!

No American film before has given us this message or embodied it in such rich and dignified language.

The greater part of *Zola* deals with the Dreyfus affair and Zola's fight in it. The trial, which has every contemporary significance, has all the earmarks of the Leipzig trial. Zola's fight is indicative of the entire anti-fascist front.

One could easily find fault with the film, with its presentation of the details of Zola's life, with the documentation of his literary career. But then the film makes no pretensions to historical accuracy. And then, if in America there was a tradition of such films, such criticism at this time would be legitimate and desirable. But this is the first of its kind and, in a way, precious. It is tastefully produced, skillfully acted, and splendidly written. The only really bad spot in the film is the opening sequence which attempts to establish Zola's early poverty and his intimate relationship with Cézanne (Vladimir Sokoloff). The conception and direction is entirely too kittenish. But these defects are very minor indeed when one takes the film as a whole.

Director William Dieterle gives the film several superb directorial touches. The sequence of the Dreyfus frame-up is magnificent. As the General Staff look down their list of officers for a goat, they come to the name of Alfred Dreyfus. A close-up of the ledger with the description "Jew" after the name. A finger comes into the frame, and the commander says: "I wonder how he ever became a member of the General Staff." And another voice says, "That's our man. Sandherr, take action at once." The parallel with Hitler Germany is obvious.

The film closes with Zola's funeral. Anatole France (beautifully played by Morris Carnovsky) delivers the funeral oration, in which he utters the famous words, "He was a moment of the conscience of mankind!" And, "You who are enjoying today's freedom take

to your hearts the words of Zola! Do not forget those who fought the battles for you and bought your liberty with their genius and blood. Do not forget them and applaud the lies of fanatical intolerance!"

The implications of the film are powerful and profound. But also, they are immersed in historical incident and biography. Will Hollywood dare a contemporary theme?

You Can't Have Everything (20th-Century Fox): A better than average backstage musical film in which the Ritz brothers are extremely funny. This film also marks the première of ex-strip-teaser Gypsy Rose Lee in the part of a hard-hearted Amazon. Very deplorable, however, is a dance in which Haille Selassie is caricatured in a very disgusting but typically Darryl Zanuck manner.

San Quentin (Warner Bros.). The story was the basis of a powerful drama about regeneration of prisoners. It was directed and conceived in the typical stock manner with a typical group of Warner Bros. stock players.

PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

WITH the exception of a coming dance festival at Bennington, Vermont, the dance season is over. It has been a turbulent season, marked not so much by any startlingly new contributions to the terpsichorean arts as by the upheaval caused by W.P.A. pink slips and the consequent hunger strike. The gov-



John Mack

"I must ask you to overlook the snarl. My bally valet is on strike."

ECHO LAKE TAVERN
A Camp for Adults
in the
ADIRONDACKS
WARRENSBURG, N.Y.

**COLORFUL
CONGENIAL
COMFORTABLE**

RATES: \$29.50 UP

ECHO LAKE TAVERN
WARRENSBURG, NEW YORK
City Phone: VANDerbilt 3-9875

The Fieldstone

on Round Lake

A place of unexcelled beauty for rest and recreation in the heart of the Ramapo Mountains, one hour from New York.

Swimming, boating, tennis, riding,
golf and other sports

P. O. BOX 297
MONROE, N. Y.

TELEPHONE:
MONROE 2501

A descriptive folder will be sent at your request.
By Reservation Only.

FREEZEMONT PARK ARMONK, N.Y.

Pleasurable retreat for rest and solitude, among scenic hills of Westchester Co. Hotel with camp activities. 100-acre estate, private lake, sports, golf nearby. 30 miles from city, excellent cuisine, reasonable rates.

For information, write or telephone
ARMONK VILLAGE 955

HOTEL CAPITOL

LIVINGSTON MANOR NEW YORK
I. GOODMAN, Proprietor

IDEAL VACATION FOR YOUNG FOLKS

Tennis—Horseback Riding—Swimming—Rowing
Handball—Baseball—And All Social Activities.

"OUR FOOD IS OUR REPUTATION"

Modern Rates—Special Low Rates for Groups
Phone 194—Cars at Station

FOR COMPLETE RELAXATION

VINEYARD LODGE

ULSTER PARK, NEW YORK

"Garden Spot of Ulster County"

Where peace and tranquility reign supreme. Modern hotel, midst beautiful orchards, vineyards and woodland. All sports, solariums, swimming, social activities. Rate: \$18.00.

J. ROSENTHAL, Kingston 3430

VITA-RAY HOUSE

FREEHOLD, NEW JERSEY

A Vegetarian Resort

- All Outdoor Sports on Premises—Golf Nearby
- Beautiful country
- Variety of excellently prepared foods
- Fare, \$1.60 round-trip

\$22 A WEEK — \$3.50 A DAY

For New York Information

BESTFOOD RESTAURANT

V. Tofilowsky

225 West 36th Street

Tel. CHickering 4-8547

TALL TIMBER

LAKE MOHEGAN, N. Y., Peekskill 3275

Only 85c from Grand Central to Peekskill. 2½ mile lake, 3 tennis courts, 2 handball courts. Other sports facilities. Horses and Golf nearby. Weekly tennis and handball tournaments. Special entertainment. \$22 weekly; \$4.50 per day.



SOUTH WIND

LIMITED TO 125 ADULT GUESTS
145 Beautiful Acres Large Private Lake
Swimming, rowing, fishing, tennis. ALL sports, dancing, professional theatre.
Reasonable rates.

You'll like the folks you meet here

SOUTH WIND, Woodbourne, N. Y.

New York Office: 154 Nassau St.

BEekman 3-1778

ernment has forcefully proved to the dancers that theirs is no longer an isolated art.

Perhaps now is the best time to review, even though belatedly, certain notable contributions to dance literature. A book of considerable interest is Paul David Magriel's *A Bibliography of Dancing* (H. W. Wilson Co.). It contains a listing of the various periodicals, dictionaries, bibliographies, etc., in the dance field, and a commendable cataloguing of works, outlines, critical essays, and articles on the history and criticism of the dance; folk, national, regional, and ethnological dances; the art of dancing; ballet; mime, and pantomime; masques, and accessories. It covers such divers items as dancing and the church, physiology of dancing, dance notation, dance halls, and poetry of the dance.

Of course, any bibliography is limited by the time element, and in so lively an art as the dance there are bound to be considerable important omissions. For example, the wide range of articles that have appeared in the various daily newspapers and smaller magazines have been overlooked completely. As bibliographies go, however, Magriel's work is a compact presentation that provides a mine of information for the future historians of the art.

Three other books should prove of invaluable service to the dance student, and incidentally to the dance audience. They are Lincoln Kirstein's compressed history of classical theatrical dancing, *Dance* (G. P. Putnam's Sons); John Martin's *America Dancing* (Dodge Publishing Co.), a story of the background and personalities of the modern dance; and Irving Deakin's excellent introduction to ballet (for beginners), *To the Ballet* (Dodge).

Lincoln Kirstein goes back to primitive dancing, works his way from the ritual myth and drama dance of Egypt, through the Greek dance and theater to the contemporary scene. Kirstein is, of course, completely sold on the ballet as the form and technique of dance, and his book is entirely pointed in that direction. Whatever the special prejudice of the reader, however, there is such a fund of material in the work as to make it indispensable reading for the serious student of the dance; for the general lay audience, Kirstein's volume makes good, if sometimes heavy, reading.

John Martin's book has been discussed in this column before. There is a good, even exciting essay on the background of the modern dance in America. But then his book tends to the gossipy and often superficial analysis of the modern movement. It is most valuable for its chronological material. It lacks the broader social approach to the historical development of the art, telling the *how* of modern dancing, neglecting the *why* of it. There is no better book on the contemporary dance scene, however, and whatever its deficiencies, it provides a picture of a more important art current where one was sadly lacking.

The most happy quality about Irving Deakin's book is the comparative lack of that ecstatic effeminate writing that generally

The Vacation Buy of the Year COPAKE

The Island Paradise on Beautiful Lake Copake
CRARYVILLE, NEW YORK

Nationally selected as the Ideal Camp. The only Resort with all lake front. Modern Bungalows with every convenience and private showers. Magnificent 18-hole championship golf course. 12 fast tennis courts. Hand ball. Saddle horses. Aquatics. Unsurpassed food and entertainment.

\$100 Worth of Vacation
Enjoyment for **\$32.50**

N. Y. Office: 116 Nassau St. BEekman 3-5590

**FUN
FOR
ALL!**

All sports facilities
Private lake
Swimming pool!
Social and theatrical program
directed by
JOHN FORD,
New York
stage director
of "STEEL."
Reasonable rates.

COOKS FALLS LODGE

COOKS FALLS, NEW YORK
N. Y. Office—250 W. 57th Street
Phone: COLUMBUS 5-3690

RESERVE NOW!

MAUD'S SUMMER-RAY

NORTH BRANCH SULLIVAN CO., N. Y.
HOTEL-CAMP FACILITIES

—Horseback Riding—
Handball—Tennis—Swimming—Rowing

"Air-Conditioned" Rates

200 acres of hiking. Enjoy fresh, delicious food.

MODICOTT PUPPETS

SYMPHONIC STRING QUARTET

PROFESSIONAL THEATRICALS

Bus: Sullivan County Bus Line, 242 W. 34th Street.

1368 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, New York.

Trains: Erie R. R. 23rd Street or Chambers Street

Ferry, Stop at Callicoon Station.

Phone: Callicoon 95. City information: DI 2-5786.

Royal Hotel and Country Club

GREENFIELD PARK NEW YORK

On the scenic hills of the

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS

BEN SHAW and group from New Theatre League. Artistic Artists and Floridian Marionettes. All sports, dancing nightly.

• Rates: **\$22.50** and up •

DAY CAMP FOR CHILDREN

For information call—New York Office,
521 Fifth Avenue—MURRAY HILL 2-6773.
Management: H. Davis & J. Doroshkin.

Carefree! Friendly! Informal!

LAKE CHODIKEE LODGE

HIGHLAND, N. Y.

Hampshire Players in Dramatic and Musical Repertoire. Adult Social and Athletic Activities. Lecture Forum. Open Air University now in session under leadership of Irving Davidson, popular lecturer and humorist.

Free transportation by boat for two weeks' vacationist.

Phone for details.
Saddle horses with free ride and instructions.

PRIVATE LAKE

RATES \$27.50 Up

New York City, 1202 Kings Highway, B'klyn. ES. 5-4330