

"Trotskyism—A Social Menace"

hear
CLARENCE HATHAWAY
Editor, Daily Worker

at the
BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC
30 Lafayette Avenue, Near Flatbush Avenue
on

MONDAY — 8:15 P. M.
FEBRUARY 8, 1937

Questions from Floor

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cent gesture. The beating of the drums is
for their justification and not for satire or
condemnation.

And completely in line with his ideological
approach is the dancer's *Figures of Earth*. "In
the earth-struggle, Man, and his counterpart,
have failed. For they love only to hate, create
only to destroy, etc." This is the accompany-
ing program note, and whatever its justifica-
tion so far as the dance is concerned, the
choreography is in essence the story of "Tom
Jones," "Civic Virtue," the male triumphant,
or, for all purposes, the place of the woman
(man's counterpart) is in the kitchen.

Nimura is not an important figure in the
dance field; his influence, if he has any at
all, is not too significant. This, of course,
might be expected, considering the nature of
his work. But the Japanese dancer has a
good sense of movement, of theater; he can
build up an audience, and undoubtedly he will
—but not among the people who move with
what Plekhanov called the "great emancipa-
tory ideas of our times."

Dvora Lapson (Hassidic dance-mime, she
labels herself) is given to bourgeois apologet-
ics: to nostalgia, religious ritual, and back-to-
Palestine nationalism, all completely in the
best Zionist tradition. The jim-crow Ghetto
becomes the sentimental place of quaint cus-
tom, the *Shadchente* (Marriage Broker), and
the dreamy-eyed boy under the green trees.
The synagogue is hallowed. *Eretz Yisrael*
(Land of Israel) is symbolized in the "ex-
hilaration of work on the soil" (what there is
of it) and the joyous "spirit of the new peas-
antry."

There is a body of contemporary Yiddish
dancing that has a proletarian sympathy, nota-
bly the work of Benjamin Zemach (in
200,000, the Artef production), Lillian Sha-
pero, Lilly Mehlman, and Miriam Blecher.
Work built on traditional Yiddish themes,
even in the most ecstatic of Hassidic celebra-
tions, it is sensitive to the basic conflicts and
sufferings of the people.

Dvora Lapson is young to the concert field,
and the definite inadequacies of her technique
and composition perhaps may be overlooked.
Her approach to composition, however, grows
out of fundamental contradictions. It cannot
be expected that an artist, any more than an
art, will flourish from a base that must be and
is in a state of disintegration.

OWEN BURKE.

THE SCREEN

IT IS not putting it too strongly when I
say that *Spain in Flames* (Cameo, N. Y.)
is composed of raw documentary material (the
shots themselves, apart from the editing) that
is the most amazing, the most poignant and
terrifying I've ever seen. Material that is so
moving is rare in film documentation and im-
possible to recreate in synthetic form. This
feature is, in reality, two short films. The
first, *The Fight for Freedom* (the first pro-
duction of the newly-formed Film Historians,
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of the Spanish civil war. From an historical

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and economic introduction, the film moves on to the invasion of Spain by Nazi and Italian Fascist propaganda, then to the revolt of the generals and officers, and finally to the actual civil war. It contains, among other material, some of the film issued by the Spanish government. (But it is a mistake to say that all of *The Fight for Freedom* was "photographed by official Spanish government cameramen.") The second part, *No Pasaran* (They Shall Not Pass) is a four-reel document entirely photographed at the front by Soviet cameramen. Here you see the Nazi warships in Alicante harbor; the delivery of foodstuffs and supplies by a Soviet steamer to the people of Spain; the siege of the Alcazar; the bombing of Madrid and the evacuation of the children; and finally, two stirring speeches by La Pasionaria and Diaz. Some of the shots of the bombing of Madrid have already been shown in this country. But you haven't seen anything if you miss this film.

A picture of another revolt of another day is presented in the John Ford-Dudley Nichols version of Sean O'Casey's drama of the Easter Week 1916 rebellion in Dublin, *The Plough and the Stars* (RKO-Radio). It is only natural that we should look forward to this film on the basis of last year's *The Informer*. While it overshadows anything that has come from Hollywood this year in artistic and social importance, it is nevertheless disappointing. For those who have seen or read the play, and those who know Irish history, this film will seem inadequate. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that John Ford has endeavored to create a film that is dramatic and socially stimulating. He has also photographed it in a manner that tries to convey the feeling of those dark and terrible days of 1916. And while he has succeeded, in his sequences of street fighting, of the capture of the General Post Office by Jim Connolly and his Citizen's Army, of the scene in Bessie's living room, and of the execution of Connolly, Ford's attempts have in the main been curbed by the producers, some bad casting (especially in the case of Barbara Stanwyck), and his own inability to break away from Hollywood conventions. It is encouraging that both Nichols's story and Ford's direction went *beyond* the play. They give us an indication of Jack Clitheroe's hatred for the ruling class in the scene in which Jack and his wife walk through the park. They portray Connolly's execution (in an armchair) by the English firing squad. But in going beyond the limitations of the play's literary form, they ventured into political territory. The film gives us the first part of John Pearse's reading of the proclamation: "Irishmen and Irishwomen. In the name of God and of the dead generations . . . Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom. . . ." The program of the uprising is left there. If the rest of the proclamation had been filmed, it would have given meaning to Jack's last words that "some day Ireland will be free." Instead, it is half O'Casey, half a political document. But we can be grateful to Nichols and to Ford for

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their attempt. And we should be grateful for the Abbey Theater players in the cast, especially Barry Fitzgerald, who plays Fluther. Erin O'Brien-Moore (formally of the Provincetown players), who plays Rosie, would have done better in Barbara Stanwyck's role.

Masquerade in Vienna (55th Street Playhouse, N. Y.) is a delightful melodrama of pre-war Vienna. It is the original Austrian film from which M.G.M.'s *Escapade* was copied. Although the Hollywood film was reproduced almost frame for frame, this original is many times more fresh and entertaining.

PETER ELLIS.

THE THEATER

THE brimstone whiff of authentic fascist propaganda is drifting across the footlights at the Lyceum in New York these days, where Richard Aldrich and Richardson Myers have installed *Tide Rising*, by George Brewer, Jr., with Grant Mitchell as the star. We say "fascist propaganda" with no loose lip; we mean exactly that. It is a propaganda play primarily, and it makes use of the fascist formula for demagoguery by seeming to strike out equally at capitalists and Marxist-led workers, and by making "the public" and "public order" the criterion superior to the interests of either group. The fascist trick of building up a weight of sympathy for the workers and their cause, and then portraying radical leadership as the influence that threatens them and the "public" alike, is skillfully used—so skillfully, indeed, that the radical spectator develops a warm feeling for the play for at least half its length, after which the reversal of emphasis is so sharp that this reviewer, for one, felt that, with his guard down, he had been kicked in an unprotected part of his anatomy. Which is also by way of being an old fascist trick. The most dangerous thing about the play is its effectiveness, a trait which is helped as much by Grant Mitchell's appealing and persuasive performance as by the author's fairly authentic picture of the economic and political position of a petty-bourgeois businessman in the midst of a depression.

The play tells the story of Jim Cogswell, small-town druggist and good neighbor, who refuses to kowtow to the mill-owner and to the labor leader (the old-line collaborationist type—also local political boss). His son, who went to New York and married a Communist, comes home, unemployed, with his wife, also unemployed (she wears flat-heeled shoes and a leather jacket), to get the old folks' help in getting a job. Papa Jim swallows his independence and asks the mill-owner to place her. She (Tamara) at once goes to work organizing the mill workers for strike, against the opposition of the old-line labor leader. She succeeds, and the mill-owner imports strikebreakers. With the class war about to break into the open, Papa Jim, the local judge, and the chief of the local police (no less!) have a conference on how both the mill owner and the strikers can be put in their place. Their recipe is to close the mill, bundle the strikebreakers out of town, and halt the

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